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IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING DEAD

PRENTISS TUCKER

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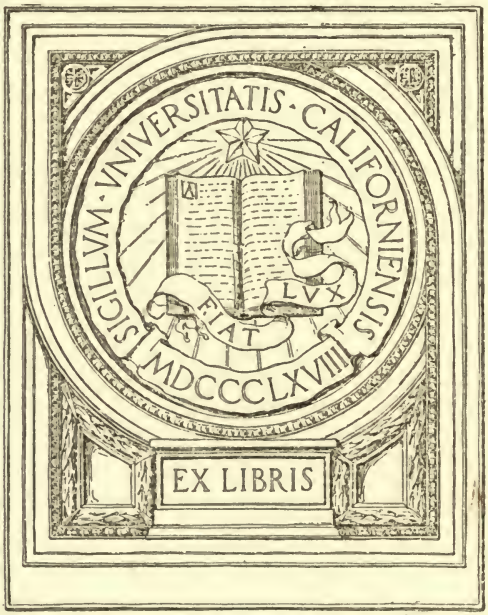

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Prentiss Tucker

In The Land of The Living Dead

An Occult Story

BY

PRENTISS TUCKER

FIRST EDITION

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CHAPTER I

A Visit to the Invisible Planes

IT ALL came about from a German high-explosive shell.

Nothing happens without a cause. We might say that this story began in Germany when Gretchen Hammerstein put the finishing touches on a certain high-explosive shell and with the contact of her fingers filled the shell with the vibrations of her hatred for the Americans. We might note the various occurrences which, each the result of an endless train of circumstances, contributed to the fact that this particular shell was brought to the German front at just such a time and just such a place. But to follow up these lines of happenings, almost infinite in number, would require an infinitude of patience.

So we will take up the history of events when this high-explosive shell burst in the American trenches, scattering, besides its material and visible charge and fragments, the hatred for Americans which Gretchen Hammerstein had packed into it.

Jimmie Westman was leaning against the trench wall nearest the German line and was peering through the well *camouflaged* peephole which was used to

watch the dreary and awful wastes of No Man's Land in guarding against any surprise attack. The shell burst within a few feet of him and to the rear, but Jimmie did not know it. It was, in fact, a long time before he found out just what had happened, and it is of the things which came in between the bursting of the shell and the time when Jimmie was able to reconstruct the whole affair, that I wish to tell. They were quite remarkable events; they produced a great impression upon Jimmie and completely changed his ideas of life.

It was, as I have said, a long time before Jimmie regained consciousness after the explosion. To be exact it was practically three days, and while he is lying in that condition of *coma* let us take a little look into his life and history.

Jimmie was not born of poor but honest parents. His parents were honest but not poor, and though not rich they had given him a good up-bringing and a good education. He had gone through high school and was engaged in the study of medicine when the war broke out. I say he was engaged in it. I like Jimmie and am reluctant to say that he was putting far more of his time into the sports of the gridiron and the diamond than he should have done, but, nevertheless, that was the case. He was a specimen of the clean, honorable, somewhat careless American boy, eager to succeed, eager to stand high in work and

sport alike, but glamoured to a certain extent by the adulation paid to the prominent athletes in the college which he attended.

However, he was engaged in the study of medicine, partially engaged, perhaps I should add, and he was really deeply interested in his chosen profession although he had not progressed so far as to be very profound in his knowledge of *materia medica.* He had imbibed some of the scientific spirit of the lecturers to whom he had listened, and his mind had taken on a rather skeptical tinge which had given his mother some little worry; still not very much for well she knew that her early teachings were deeply rooted, and the character of her boy was too strong for the scientific skepticism of his surroundings to do much more than ruffle the surface of his clean young life.

But Jimmie had an inquiring soul, and while the platitudes, most of them grossly illogical and unscientific, which he heard from the pulpit when he did go to church, produced little effect upon him, yet the objections put forward by the doctors and students with whom he was associated seemed to him to be also lacking in force and weak in reason. He was swayed between the two but controlled by neither, though at heart he was inclined to be deeply religious as most people are if they have the chance.

In the first year of his college life the great war began. It was practically at the end of the first year

just before the final examinations, and when he went home for the summer vacation the whole country was seething. Farsighted ones knew that the war would involve the United States. Fanatics and fanatical pacifists fought every measure of safety and sided with the traitors and the enemies of liberty and justice. Jimmie began to think and turned over and over in his mind the state of the world, and when he went back to his study in the fall it was with the settled conviction that the United States would soon have to enter and that he would necessarily be involved. At that time no one had foreseen the shortage of doctors, and Jimmie, feeling sure that the fight was a righteous one and that it was his duty to help even though his country still held back, during the second year of his medical course enlisted with the Canadians. He paid a short visit home first and succeeded in making his mother and father see the matter in his way, though it was the hardest task he had ever attempted.

It was when he was home on this errand that he got the news of the death of an old friend of his. She had grown up with him and the loss of her dispelled a dream which had half formed in his mind and toward the realization of which he had unconsciously been working.

So he enlisted and was whirled into the great seething cauldron of war.

By the time the United States came in, he was a war

worn veteran of wide experience in spite of his youth, and he sought and obtained a transfer from the Canadian troops to those of his own country by whom he was welcomed with enthusiasm. At the time the shell burst which made so great a change in his life he was second lieutenant with a good chance of promotion.

He had not heard the shell, and as I have said did not know that it had exploded, so was somewhat surprised to find himself in a part of the country which he did not know. It was a wide, meadow-like stretch of land sloping gently upward and he was walking leisurely along as though he had all the time there was at his disposal.

The first return of consciousness found him walking up this gentle slope, wandering a little in his mind because, as he remembered it, he should have been at his post in the trench. Things were a little different somehow, but just how, he could not for the life of him understand.

He seemed to be moving with considerable ease, much more than he was accustomed to, for the everlasting mud of this country did stick to one's boots terribly and it was often hard work to place one foot before the other. Now, however, he was stepping along easily and without effort, but he did not know where he was going, or where he came from.

The trench was not in sight but he was walking so

entirely without effort that it made little difference to him, for he could find it, doubtless, even though his knowledge of French was quite limited.

Thank goodness! he was not behind the enemy lines.

But stop!

If he were behind his own lines and did not know how he got there, why might he not be behind the enemy lines equally without his knowledge?

His mind was coming back to him more and more. It was as if he had awakened from a deep sleep and was just coming to himself.

But if he had been asleep, why did not some of the boys come and wake him up before the whole line had been pushed forward like this?

For goodness sake! where was the trench? Where was the camp, the communication trenches, the roads, everything? Where was this place, this nice, easy meadow sloping gently upwards?

The line must have gone forward and he had been left behind in his sleep. That was evidently so, because if the line had gone backwards, the *bosches* would have waked him up with their pleasant "civilized" custom of killing the wounded and the sleeping, if there were any sleeping. No, the line had gone forward and somehow he had not waked up but had evidently walked in his sleep to this place, wherever this place might be.

He could not remember leaving the firing post

where he had been watching through the peephole, but that was a mere detail. The main thing now was to find out where the command was and rejoin it. He could easily find it because he knew how to keep his direction by the sun.

Involuntarily he looked up. The sun was not visible, although it was broad daylight and there was no haze apparent.

Never before in France had he seen so long a stretch of country with no signs of humanity. Either there were towns and hamlets and farms or there was the awful desolation where the *bosches* had passed, but this meadow showed neither the one nor the other. It was certainly an enormous meadow, especially for France. Put a number of tractors on this place and the dread of famine would pass away for there was land enough here to raise food for a kingdom.

But time was passing and he must hurry; also he must think of some kind of excuse for his absence, for the captain was pretty strict on such subjects and sleep-walking might not be taken as a valid reason for being away from his post of duty.

"Why don't you *glide?*"

"What do you mean by '*glide*'?"

He turned to see who spoke, for he had heard no footsteps and had thought he was quite alone. He saw a girl walking along beside him or, at least, moving along beside him, for apparently she was not walk-

ing the conventional way. He knew her well, and as he recognized her he felt his face grow pale, for the girl beside him was one who had been a particular friend of his. But he had been told on his last visit home that she had—had—well, that she had died while he was away at college and just before his return to say good-bye to his parents previous to enlisting. He must have been misinformed, somehow. He looked at her, edged away just a trifle, pinched himself, and was quite at a loss just what to do or say. It must be that she had not died but perhaps she had been sent to an insane asylum and had gotten over here to France somehow by mistake; and here she was talking nonsense to him about *"gliding"*.

He glanced at her again. By jove, she *was* gliding! For heaven's sake! Had he gone crazy too?

A merry peal of laughter interrupted his amazement. It was the old, joyous, hearty laugh of the girl he had known so well.

By jiminy! she was laughing at him. Bewildered? Well, who wouldn't be bewildered in such a case?

Thoughts flash through the mind at times with terrific rapidity, and the thoughts which I am setting down apparently took a long time to occur, but in reality they were almost instantaneous and practically took no time at all; yet they had a logical sequence

and seemed to him at the time to be slow and careful reasoning.

She was laughing at him! Ghosts don't laugh. It is not—not—well, it simply is not done, that's all. Everybody knows that ghosts don't laugh. And she was talking to him about *gliding*. That showed that she was crazy and upheld the insane asylum theory but, and here he glanced again at her feet—she really *was* gliding. At least she was not walking by lifting up one foot and putting it down again in front of the other. No she was gliding and laughing at him.

Besides, ghosts are gloomy, distraught, lovers of darkness and graveyards and midnight and mystery and of frightening people. Yet here was one, if she really were a ghost, who was looking at him with a really beautiful face, happy, apparently joyous, and frankly and unaffectedly amused at him,—at him!

He remembered her well. He had known her well. He had been—er—well to tell the truth—he had thought that perhaps when he got started in his profession—oh! shucks, he must be dreaming. He was in France, had come over to fight the Kaiser and to make the world safe for democracy, and that was a serious job.

Yet here she was laughing at him. How could such a mistake have occurred? They had told him all about it. They had gone over it again and again for they knew how he had—cared for her. Yet they

must have made a mistake. He had to believe the evidence of his own eyes.

Dear heart, but she was pretty now! She had been pretty before, beautiful, he had thought, but now she seemed radiant. Now she was walking and with that little dancing step which cannot be described but is called "tripping."

She moved slightly ahead and half turned toward him, laughing at him in such a natural way, just like her own old self, that he began to laugh too. Things had seemed pretty serious, but with so much merriment around and such a pretty girl mocking him he could not realize that the Huns were so near and that so much human suffering was going on.

She instantly grew serious as though she had divined his thought.

"I couldn't help it, Jimmie, you looked so bewildered."

"I surely am bewildered. How did you get here, over here in France? And why did they tell me that you had—er—gone—" he groped helplessly for a way to express the thought.

She answered him with a rippling little laugh at his dilemma.

"Don't be afraid to say it, Jimmie."

He *was* "afraid to say it" however and he countered with—

"How did you get here?"

"I was sent."

"Look here, Marjorie, don't fool me. How did you get over here in France?"

"Truly, Jimmie, I am not 'fooling'; honest Injun, as we used to say, I *was* sent, really and truly I was, but I asked to be sent," she added. "You see the others were so busy and there was not much that I could do, but I knew that I could help you and I knew that you would be glad to see me, so I asked for permission and the Elder Brother gave it to me; he is always so kind to me."

The insane asylum theory received a new impetus with this statement. The "Elder Brother" must be one of the doctors, but she didn't talk like an insane person. She was radiantly beautiful now, far more beautiful than she had been when he had seen her last, and she was talking rationally, but who in the dickens was this "Elder Brother"? She was an only child. It must be the doctor.

He had been through an insane asylum once with a party of sight-seers and had not noticed that any of the women inmates were beautiful. Even if one of them had been pretty, the expression of the eyes would have offset any mere physical prettiness. But this dancing, gliding, tripping girl beside him, with her blue eyes and fair hair, was so bewilderingly, dazzlingly beautiful, and her eyes had not a trace of that

fixed stare or lack of focus which makes the insane person so terrible to look at.

And, besides, she *could* glide! Great Scott! He had forgotten that. She could *glide*! How in the dickens could any one *glide?* It just can't be done, except on skates—

"Oh yes, it can! You can do it yourself!"

"Me! How did you know what I was thinking of?"

"Why, I can tell from your aura."

"My—what?"

"Aura. Your aura! Don't you know you have an aura?"

"Never heard of it before. I got a medal for sharpshooting, but they didn't give me any aura and I know I didn't bring one over with me."

She danced around in front of him as he walked, gliding, tripping, and looking tantalizingly at him first from one side and then from the other, and all the time laughing at him with that thrilling, tinkling laugh of hers, so full of merriment and fun. She was laughing so that she could not speak for some moments. He did not understand what the joke was, but it was evidently a good one and she was so happy over it and so pretty that he reached out and took her hand and they danced along together, laughing, she at him and he at himself, for the joke he could not understand.

"By Jove! He had forgotten!

By all the rules he ought to be worn out. Since the big bombardment had commenced several days ago he had not known what it was not to be tired; yet here he was, dancing along with this pretty girl just as though he was as fresh as a daisy. Ah! He felt tired now, dreadfully tired; it just showed the force of mind over matter that he had forgotten his weariness for an instant in the joy of this new-found friendship. He could hardly drag one foot after the other.

She drew her hand away with that old, familiar expression of pretense at anger.

"You're not tired, either! You just *think* you are. Now make up your mind that you're *not* tired!"

"I can't Marjorie! I'm awfully tired. Why I haven't had any sleep for two nights, and tramping around in that mud and all—why—Marjorie, a fellow can't do that for three days and *not* be tired."

"Now, Jimmie, don't you *know* you didn't feel at all tired at first? When we were walking along and you were wondering how I came to be here, you were not tired at all because you were not thinking of it, and now just because you *think* you *ought* to be tired you go and *get* tired. Let's sit down awhile."

"It's too damp here for you to be sitting on the ground; you'd catch your death of cold."

She laughed at him.

"No, I won't catch my death of cold. It's quite dry here. See how dry the ground is. Besides I *can't* catch my death of cold. There are reasons. That's what I came to tell you about, but I don't know how to begin, Jimmie."

He looked at the ground. It really was perfectly dry, just as she had said.

"Well, let's sit down, then. But remember I've got to hurry back and report and so I can't stop but a minute or two. But what did you come to tell me about? And why can't you tell it? I never knew you to be unable to hold up your end of the conversation, Marjorie. What is it you want to tell me?"

"Oh, Jimmie! It's hard to tell you. You won't believe me."

"Yes, I will, Marjorie. I'll believe anything you say. But there are some mighty queer things happening this morning that I don't understand at all. Now, how did you come here?"

"Just as I told you. I was sent. But I *asked* to be sent because I wanted to help you. And now I don't know how to say it."

"Who sent you, Marjorie?"

"The Elder Brother. Oh, he is so kind and good to me."

"Who is this 'Elder Brother'—a doctor?"

She smiled, a little sadly but very sweetly.

"Do you remember what you thought first when I

spoke to you and you looked around and saw who it was?''

''Yes. I remember what I thought—but—but—you don't know what I had been told.''

''Oh, yes I do, for I was there when you were told, and I saw you turn around and swallow something in your throat and I know you were told I was—was—dead.''

''Yes. That's just what I was told, and I believed it because everybody said it and they took me out and showed me the—the—grave and—and—''

''Yes, Jimmie dear, I know all about it for I was there and heard it all, and I saw how you went out that night, way out into the country and into that old lane in which we used to walk, and how you cried and cried when you thought no one knew. Yes, I know all about it, Jimmie, for I was there.''

''You!—there!''

''Yes, Jimmie, my dear friend, my dear, *dear* friend. I was there and I saw your grief and I put my arms around you and tried to comfort you. I was there, for it was true—what they told you—it was *true.*''

''You were—you are—?''

''Yes, dear friend, I *was* dead. There! I might as well say it.'' She smiled through the tears for she was frankly crying now.

''I might as well use the hateful word. It has to

be used though it is untrue—untrue, Jimmie. We never die. Neither you nor I are dead. No! We are both more alive than we ever were before for we are one step nearer the great Source of all life and love, and I know it is true for the Elder Brother told me. He is so great and good and he knows everything, Jimmie, and he knows you and all about you and he loves you too, Jimmie. I knew I *could* help you, and I have permission to tell you more than is told most of the soldiers because you are able to bear more than most of them. I know that you will believe what I tell you because it is what the Elder Brother has told me. And, oh! Jimmie dear, it is nothing to worry about for now you will be able to do so much more work when you have learned about the war and the other things and about the Master."

She spoke now with almost a whisper and with awe making her beautiful face even more lovely than it had been.

"You will learn about the Master and how we can work for Him and maybe, maybe if you work hard for Him, Jimmie, some day you will see Him. I saw Him once," she added proudly; "I saw Him once at a distance. I think He looked at me and I felt so happy that I just danced and sang for a long time. But that was before they had let me do any of the war work that is going on here. They told me at first that the conditions were too terrible for me to try to help

until I got stronger, but since then they have let me help a little, especially with the children. I do love to take the little ones when they first come over, so terrified and so frantic, and soothe them to sleep and work with them until they realize that they are surrounded with love over on this side and not with that awful hate which has so filled poor Belgium. I feel so sorry for the dear little mites. I have helped in this way a good deal lately."

Jimmie had not known what an aura was when the thing was mentioned but now he saw Marjorie surrounded with a glowing cloud, a radiating light of which she seemed unconscious but of which she was the center. It made her far more beautiful than she had been, and Jimmie shrank back a little, feeling unworthy to be so near one of God's own saints.

"Since I began this work I haven't danced much" Marjorie continued, "not nearly as much as I have today, for I am so glad to see you and to be allowed to come and help you. It is the first time they have allowed me to meet any of the soldiers who have come over for it is a dangerous thing sometimes. It needs great strength and wisdom and I have neither, but I have one thing that counts for more, far more." She turned away and whispered the words to herself; Jimmie was not sure but he thought the words were —"I have love."

"Oh, Marjorie! Do you mean that I am—what we just now said?"

"Yes, you are, Jimmie, but don't let it worry you for it is really an advantage. There are lots of reasons why it is a great thing to be here and I am going to tell you some of them. But you are lucky for the Elder Brother is coming to meet you."

"I don't want to meet any Elder Brothers. I want to talk to you."

He reached out and took her hand.

"If I am dead then you are too and so neither of us has any advantage. I'm sure you don't *look* dead a bit and I don't *feel* dead. I can't make head or tail of it."

CHAPTER II

A Sergeant's Experience

"O JIMMIE, the Elder Brother is coming! Oh! Oh! I'm so glad for it must be that he wants to talk to you himself."

"Well, I wish he'd stay away. I want to talk to you—"

"Here he is—"

Jimmie turned in response to a gesture from Marjorie and saw standing before him a man, somewhat past middle age, tall, erect, and with nothing so prominent about him as the ability to inspire in others the feeling of being in the immediate presence of great power. The man bowed slightly and while Marjorie and Jimmie were rising, spoke:

"I know you very well, Mr. Westman, especially through the help of our little friend here," and he touched Marjorie's curls gently and lovingly. "I sent her to meet you first but must not tax her too greatly. I want you to come with me for a while, and later you may have a long talk with her."

The newcomer's manner and tone bore such an air of quiet authority that Jimmie never for an instant entertained a thought of appeal. He merely responded to Marjorie's little graceful gesture of adieu

and turned to walk beside the man whom Marjorie had called the "Elder Brother."

They walked for some distance in silence, a silence which Jimmie thought it best not to break, for in some way which he could not explain, he felt as though this man was quite a "big bug" in this country, and so he walked on silently until the man himself might feel moved to begin the conversation.

Some rods had been passed in slow pacing before the silence was broken. In the meantime Jimmie had cast a furtive glance around to see how far Marjorie had gone, but to his surprise she was not in sight at all although he was sure he could see a couple of miles in any direction.

"You have had a good rest," his companion said at length, "and it will not be too great a tax upon you to map out briefly some of the duties which it will be your privilege to attend to in this new life upon which you have entered. But before that I will show you a little of what has happened and is happening, and as soon as you are ready for the information I shall show you just why this war was allowed to come upon the world and in just what manner your help will be needed.

"Things are somewhat different here from what you have been accustomed to, and I want to call your attention to one thing which Marjorie hesitated to dwell upon and that is the method of your locomo-

tion. You do not need to walk in the old way; it is much more convenient and much quicker to progress by what Marjorie suggested to you at first—the glide. We all of us here move that way. It only requires a slight effort of the will and is as much superior to walking as walking is to crawling on the hands and knees. In fact there is hardly a limit to the speed of the glide and without it we would find it impossible to do the work which has to be done in these strenuous times. Try it."

At the word he began to glide just as Jimmie had seen Marjorie do. Jimmie then made the effort himself and to his surprise found that he could move along as he had often done on ice when skating, only this movement was the result of an effort of the will and required no exertion of the body at all. He was as delighted as a child with this newly acquired power and glided around like an ice skater cutting the old familiar figure eight and other patterns a number of times before he once more steadied down at the side of his new acquaintance.

There is a great deal of the boy in every man just as there is a great deal of the man in every boy, and Jimmie was frankly more absorbed and interested in the possibilities of the glide and in the fact that he had resumed his place at the Elder Brother's side without being in the least out of breath or feeling any of the effects which usually follow such strenuous exercise,

than he was in the tremendous fact that he had really and truly crossed over the "Great Divide" and was in the very act and article of learning what was on the "Other Side of Death."

Slowing down to the more dignified progress of his guide, he felt somewhat abashed at his exhibition of enthusiasm and began to apologize in an indirect manner.

"This gliding business is quite a novelty to me and it seems to be just what I have always wanted to do. I've dreamed of just that very thing at times, and when I once realized that I could actually glide, it was like doing some old, familiar stunt over again."

"You were not mistaken. It is an old familiar 'stunt.'"

"It must be that my ice skating is what made it seem natural to me."

"No. It was familiar because you have often glided and you were really used to doing it. In your sleep you have always spent your time over on this side. On most nights you were not actually conscious, yet you were partially aware of what you were doing though you were not able to take the memory back with you."

"Gee! Well, what do you know about that!"

"It's an improvement on walking, isn't it?"

"Well! I should say so. I'll sure teach it to the boys when I go back—"

He stopped short, realizing that there was no "going back."

The man's face glowed with sympathy.

"No," he said, "there is no going back, but I think that when I have shown you that which lies before you and which is so much grander and greater than what lies back of us, you will not want to go back, you will want with all your heart and soul to go forward."

"I am going to take you back to the trench where your company is, for one of your friends is going to pass over. As he will not go in the same way you did he will recover consciousness almost immediately and I want you to take charge of him. In this way you will learn a good deal about some phases of what your duties will be later on."

"And now," he continued, "before you begin actual work, I want to impress upon your mind that this war was necessary, because in no other way could the human race be saved from an impending and overwhelming fate. This fact does not in the least excuse those who are responsible for bringing it on, but I speak of it because the great conflict and awful suffering have made some think that the powers of good were helpless before the powers of evil. This is not so. God rules over all and as the sparrow cannot fall without His knowledge and will, so no war can be started without His knowledge and will; but, as said,

this does not excuse those who bring it on." His face grew very stern but withal tender, and his eyes had a far-away look in them as though his thoughts were far away over the centuries that are to come before the good which is to result from the great struggle shall have formed its pattern on the loom of time.

"Now," he resumed, "we will travel a little faster and you can use that newly found power of yours, the glide."

He began to glide as he spoke and moved faster and faster. Jimmie kept gliding along by his side, occasionally forgetting and fixing his mind on something else, and when he did this he found that he was apt to stop altogether. This he explained to himself by saying that walking had become so much a second nature to him that he could do it and still think of something else, but that gliding was yet new and so he had to center his mind on it all the time.

The Elder Brother moved faster and Jimmie followed him as well as he could, though when the guide left the earth and moved through the air Jimmie was a little dubious as to his ability to follow so strenuous a leader. Soon, however, he became more and more accustomed to the new sensation and began to take a little interest in the landscape. Now he noticed that they were passing over a part of the country which was familiar to him, and in another moment or two he saw that they were nearing the trenches. He heard

the reports of the great guns and saw the planes flying far above, for he and his guide were again nearing the earth, and in another minute they had alighted on the edge of that section of the trench where his firing post had been.

There it was yet with one of the men of the company in it, and Jimmie motioned to his friend that they had better jump down into the trench where they would be safe. It was not until the Elder Brother smiled at him in a quizzical way that he remembered the fact that the danger of bullets was over for him, that they could pass through his present ethereal body without causing discomfort.

The Elder Brother laid a hand on Jimmie's arm and pointed to a man somewhat over forty, in the uniform of a sergeant, who was sitting quietly in a little dugout smoking a cigarette and looking at an old magazine. As they were looking he threw away the stub of the cigarette, laid down the magazine, rose slowly, and stepped into the trench. He walked leisurely to the firing post, raised his head to look through the little opening, and was neatly drilled through the forehead with a rifle bullet. He stood still for a moment, then as the muscles lost their vitality they slowly relaxed, and the body as slowly leaned against the wall of trench, quietly sinking down. That was what the horrified rifleman on duty saw, but what Jimmie saw was that the sergeant quietly stepped out

of his body and stood there, looking at the rifleman with a puzzled expression on his face. Jimmy needed no guide to tell him what had happened, and he called to Sergeant Strew who looked up at him and said quietly:

"Hello, Jimmie, glad to see you. When did you blow in? I heard you'd 'gone west.' "

"Hello, old fellow," said Jimmie, "I just came out and brought a friend of mine."

He turned to the Elder Brother and said:

"I'd introduce you to my friend, Sergeant Strew, sir, if I knew your name."

Sergeant Strew seemed to evince no great surprise that Jimmie should have come out to the firing line in such a manner, bringing a friend with him as though the front trench were a visiting place, nor did the unusual circumstance strike either of them as at all out of the ordinary. It is often thus with those who have recently passed over and who have not had their powers of observation and reason trained. The sergeant knew as a matter of fact that Jimmie was dead, or at least he had been told so and had no reason to doubt the fact. Yet when Jimmie appeared alive and well and apparently comfortable, the sergeant merely accepted the fact without any hesitation. Had he seen Jimmie, however, before the sniper's bullet severed the connection between his physical and vital bodies, the case would have been entirely different.

Jimmie's very respectful mode of addressing the Elder Brother, too, was indicative not only of the atmosphere or aura of dignity and power which surrounded the Elder Brother but showed the fact that these auric vibrations were not impeded by the physical body,hence were a thousand times more potent than would have been the case on the physical plane. Jimmie knew nothing of mental vibrations and had not the slightest idea that the cause of his attitude lay outside of himself, but of the fact of this respectful attitude he was aware, and he promptly set it down to his own good upbringing.

The name which was given I may not divulge, but in its place I will substitute, and say that the Elder Brother gave the name of *Campion.*

The introduction over, the Elder Brother said: ,"Jimmie, come to me in about an hour and bring your friend."

"All right sir, but my watch has stopped and I will have to guess the time. And where will I find you, sir?"

"I will send for you when the time comes."

The Elder Brother apparently made a step from the bottom to the top of the trench and moved off towards the rear. The sergeant yelled to him and jumped to interfere but Jimmie caught him by the arm. Strew turned on Jimmie—

"Stop him! Call him back!"

"Never mind him," Jimmie shouted, "listen to me—"

"All right, Lieutenant, if you say so. But jiminy! I'm glad to see you again. Say! did you notice the way that friend of yours took the whole height of the trench at one step? Some man, that!"

"He certainly is."

"This'll be great news for the boys to find you're all right again. We heard that you got killed three days ago. I'm mighty glad to find it was a mistake. But where have you been all this time?"

Jimmie had come up at a time when there was a lull in the fighting, and Sergeant Strew's was the only casualty at the time. The sergeant was so busy looking at and talking to Jimmie that he had not noticed the group of men gathered about his dead body, and Jimmie was at a loss just how to break the news to him gently. He had never had such a job to do before—

"Well you see, Sergeant, the funny part about it is that what you heard was true."

"What was true?"

"Why, that I got killed."

"You got hit on the bean, that's what's the matter with you."

"No, I didn't either. I'm giving you the true dope. I got killed."

"Jimmie, go back and tell the doc to fix your

noodle. You've got a bad case of 'bats in your garret.' I might have known it was like that or you'd never have brought that spry old gent out here with you which you very well know is against all the regulations even if you are a lieutenant, and I don't see how in thunder he ever got out so far, past all the officers."

"Well, you see, it's this way, Sergeant, lots of men get killed and never know what's happened to them."

"Yes, an' some think they're killed when nothing has happened. Why, if you'd been killed don't you see you would be a ghost now, and then how in the dickens could I see you and be talking to you? It can't be done, Jimmie. You're just as much alive as I am."

"That's true, too, Sergeant, but if you'll look behind you a moment you'll see that you're just as dead as I am."

Jimmie pointed past him to the dead body which had been laid out on the boards at the bottom of the trench ready to be taken to the rear if things kept quiet after dark, and the sergeant turned and looked. He looked long and quietly. He walked over and stood beside the body and looked at it carefully. He spoke to the sentry in the firing post; when no answer was made he spoke again, more sharply, and then walked over and shook the man by the shoulder, or attempted to shake him, but finding that his hand went

through him he gave up the attempt, turned back to Jimmie, and said in a matter of fact way:

"I guess you're right, Jimmie. I've cashed in."

Jimmie looked at Sergeant Strew and Sergeant Strew looked at Jimmie. Neither knew what to say. The situation was a novel one, and though Jimmie might have found words with which to offer comfort to a friend who had lost some dear one, yet even that task would have been hard; but when it was the friend himself who had died and the one who sought to offer comfort was himself dead, the situation began to assume something of the comical. Jimmie smiled a little. Things were too serious to laugh about, yet there was the element of humor and that very fact of itself struck him as funny, for humor and the life after death had seemed to him before this as being as far apart as the poles. No one had ever connected the two to his knowledge. The sergeant, however, was very grave.

"So it's come at last," he said, partly to himself and partly to Jimmie. "It's come at last and it's not nearly anything like I thought it would be. Say!" he looked at Jimmie, "You have been over here for three days and you ought to be feeling at home kinda by this time; where are they?"

"Where are what?"

"Why, heaven, though I guess us fellers wouldn't go there just at first anyhow; but where's all the

things the parsons talk about, hell and the devils an' the other things? This is just like where we were before an' I don't see much difference except that yap, Milvane, couldn't hear me when I spoke to him; but what does a feller do here? Do we go an' hunt for a harp to play on or do we go on fighting or what? 'Spose a lot of German ghosts come along, what are we to do?''

''Darned if I know,'' said Jimmie to whom the idea was new.

''Well, I don't know what we can do but I bet I can lick any blankety blank German ghost that ever lived.''

Jimmie felt a peculiar sensation. He had never been a profane boy and his worst expletive had usually been the mild word ''darn.'' Stronger than this he seldom spoke but now that the sergeant used a few words of what the majority of the company would have classed as swearing, that is as *real genuine* swearing, Jimmie felt a sensation almost akin to pain. It was a mixed feeling, not physical pain and yet much like it; it was much more than mere repugnance to something he formerly would not even have noticed. He remembered the Elder Brother's request and wondered if the hour was up, and if it was whether he ought to take this friend of his into the somewhat austere presence of that strange man. His doubts were solved for him by the sudden appearance from

nowhere of a laughing little child who came dancing up to him, singing in a semi-chant as children often do:

"Come along, Jimmie, the Elder Brother wants you."

Jimmie turned to the sergeant who was attempting to interfere with a soldier busily engaged in removing the ammunition belt from the sergeant's discarded body.

"Come on, Sergeant, Mr. Campion wants to see us."

"T'hell with your friend. Look at this gutter snipe here trying to rob me of all my cartridges an' he knows blame well I got all my tobacco in one of them pockets an' I'm responsible fer that belt. Drop it, gol darn you!" This last was addressed to the soldier at whom and through whom the sergeant swung a right hand blow that would, under former circumstances, have almost felled an ox, but the soldier paid no attention to it. The sergeant was inarticulate with rage.

Jimmie had to stop a minute to get the situation clear in his own mind, and then with a laugh he interposed between the fuming sergeant and the unconcerned robber, who was not a robber but merely obeying his orders.

"Come out of it, Sergeant! You're dead! Get

me? You're dead! You can't hurt that guy. Come along with me. You're dead!"

The sergeant stepped back a pace, looked at Jimmie with a puzzled expression on his face for a moment and scratched his head.

"Danged if I aint," he said thoughtfully, "I forgot that."

"Sure." Jimmie smiled at him "and what good would your tobacco do you anyhow? You can't smoke now."

The sergeant stopped short and straightened with a jerk, looking at Jimmie, his eyes growing wide with horror.

"Aint that hell?"

Again Jimmie felt that painful feeling surge over him at the sergeant's words, and again he doubted the advisability of taking this profane soldier, brave and honorable though he knew him to be, before the Elder Brother, who was, as Jimmie had "sized him up", something in the nature of a "Gospel Sharp" or "Sky Pilot." The army seldom used the word *minister,* and Jimmie had fallen into the army vernacular. What would this friend of Marjorie's think if Sergeant Strew should forget himself and casually utter an expletive?

Again the little child with the smiling face danced before his eyes and repeated the message.

"Come along, Jimmie, the Elder Brother wants you."

This time Jimmie determined to obey.

"Come along, Sergeant, it's orders that I've got to bring you with me."

The sergeant came along, pensively, muttering to himself something about tobacco and the utter uselessness of any locality or state of being where the solacing weed could not be smoked. Nevertheless, he followed in a preoccupied manner, climbing out of the ditch after Jimmie and then nervously looking around as though just remembering that the sight of him might excite Fritz into starting a bombardment.

"Don't worry," Jimmie said, noticing the sergeant's apprehension, "Fritz can't see you and if he could he couldn't hurt you. You're just as dead as you can get."

"That's right, I never thought of that. I aint got used to the idea of being dead yet."

He drew his hand across his forehead wearily, then gave a gasp of dismay as he felt the hole in his head and took his hand away covered with blood. He felt gingerly of the place where the snipers had drilled him. "Say, I better go an' get this fixed up. This is a bad place to get hit. I might have got—it's a wonder it didn't—"

He stopped short and looked at Jimmie wistfully. The wound had evidently startled him in a way, for

the fact was that in spite of the evidence he had not yet realized that he was dead. Often it takes a long time to realize a thing which we know and admit readily as a mere statement of fact. While the sergeant knew that he was dead, yet he had not realized it nor had he learned to co-ordinate his thoughts with what he knew to be the truth, and the old impulse to get a wound "fixed up" before any complications could set in was too strong to be shaken off.

Jimmie did not know and so could not explain to the sergeant that the blood with which his hand was covered was merely the result of his own firmly fixed idea that there ought to be blood where there was such a large wound. Subconsciously the sergeant felt that if he were dead and a ghost, then it would follow that a ghost could not bleed. Yet he was bleeding, for was not his hand covered with blood? So, partly by conscious and partly by subsconscious methods he reached the point where he doubted whether he were really dead or not. Theories were thrown to the winds. The wound was a practical and compelling fact.

"Say, Jimmie, I've got to go an' get this fixed up. I'll come an' see your friend some other time. I gotta go before this gets worse."

It was, indeed, a ghastly wound, not only where the bullet had entered the forehead but much more so where it had come out at the back of the head for there the wound was much larger. Jimmie realized the ne-

cessity of getting it "fixed up," but then the thought flashed across his mind—*where?*

Grand, merciful, and devoted as the Red Cross was, there was yet no hospital he knew of, where a man who could not be seen could be treated for a deadly wound of which he had already died.

"Where you goin' to, Sergeant," he asked, "where do you think you can get that thing fixed up? Don't you know that's what killed you?"

"Don't they have no hospitals over here?" demanded the sergeant. "Where do ghosts go when they get hurt?"

"They don't get hurt."

"The dickens they don't! I'm hurt, aint I? If I don't get this fixed up somehow I'm liable to—to—"

"To what, Sergeant? Come to life again?"

"Darn you, Jimmie. This thing hurts like the dickens. It's a wonder you wouldn't flag a stretcher bearer or an ambulance or somethin' instead of standin' there grinnin' like a durn fool. Of course they have ambulances over here. Naturally they would."

CHAPTER III

A Soul Flight

"NO, THERE are no ambulances, Sergeant, but I will take you where you can have your wound attended to."

Jimmie turned to see who it was that had spoken and was somewhat startled to see the Elder Brother standing quietly with just the faint trace of a smile on his lips.

"Please come with me, both of you."

Both followed as a matter of course, it never occurring to either to question that gentle voice, which for all its gentleness seemed to carry a note of finality and authority.

"Take his hand, Jimmie," said the Elder Brother, at the same time grasping the sergeant by the other arm. Jimmie did as he was told and was amazed to find himself traveling rapidly. In a few minutes they "lit" as he afterwards described it, and he found they were on a level lawn some hundred yards distant from an enormous building of the old Grecian style of architecture, constructed with huge symmetrical columns topped by Corinthian capitals, and with a peculiar irridescence or glow surrounding the entire structure. Jimmie was not sure at first, whether he actually saw this; indeed, he did not see

it continuously, and Sergeant Strew, who seemed to be just coming out of a dream, apparently did not see it at all.

They passed, still hand in hand, across the lawn and up the rows of steps which surrounded the building and wound their way between what seemed endless rows of columns until the Elder Brother opened a door and motioned them before him into a room.

He, himself, followed and having closed the door, turned to Sergeant Strew who was apparently faint from loss of blood.

"And now, Sergeant, you must forgive me for having waited so long before attending to your injury."

He opened a little cupboard and took from one of the shelves within, a small vial filled with a dark colored substance of much the same consistency as vaseline.

"Now, Sergeant, on this side of the veil we can accomplish results far more rapidly than on the side you have just left, and you will find that if you will do as I say, your wound will be entirely healed without even leaving a scar."

He stood in front of the sergeant, smeared a little of the dark substance on his own finger, and said:

"Please stand perfectly still, Sergeant, and concentrate your mind on the way your forehead looked be-

fore you were wounded. Think of it that way and imagine that the wound was never made."

He touched the sergeant's forehead lightly with the finger on which the dark substance was smeared. The sergeant closed his eyes and screwed his face into what he thought was the right expression for one who was concentrating.

The Elder Brother removed his hand and to Jimmie's amazement the sergeant's forehead was as clean and smooth as the forehead of a child—smooth, that is, except for the wrinkles produced by his extraordinary facial contortions in trying to obey the Elder Brother's command to "concentrate."

"Well! Well!" said Jimmie.

Sergeant Strew opened his eyes.

"Your wound's all gone, as though it had never been there at all."

"Thasso?" He felt gingerly and inquiringly of his forehead.

"Doctor, I sure have to hand it to you for a first class doc. You'd make a fortune in the States. Gee! But you must be a crackerjack!"

The Elder Brother smiled.

"You did it yourself, my friend. It was your own imagination and will power, not my skill, which healed you."

Sergeant Strew looked rather mystified and furtively felt of his forehead as though in doubt of the perm-

anence of any change wrought by his own imagination, but the wound was still healed and he gave a little sight of relief.

"Whew!" he said, "If I'd only known how to do that before!" He turnel to the Elder Brother: "You really mean that I healed myself?"

"Exactly that. You healed yourself, and the stuff I smeared on was merely to help you concentrate. If you had had your arm blown off and had come over with only one arm you could have replaced your arm with as much ease as you have healed this wound. Matter on this side of the veil is wonderfully amenable to the power of the will, and the task which I wish to set you about at once is that of meeting your comrades when they pass over, quieting them and showing them how to heal their wounds and also drawing them away from the battle lines.

"For those who pass over, the war has ended, and it is their duty as well as their privilege to help, not by fighting, but by getting others to stop fighting and to begin to turn their thoughts away from the earth plane and towards the great future and the tasks and duties which it holds."

"But suppose the *bosches* make a raid. What shall I do? How can I help fighting?"

"By simply refusing to fight. You are not now on the physical plane where you could be compelled to fight. The Germans cannot hurt you even if they

do make a raid and surround you. All you have to do is to obey orders; ignore the Germans unless you can speak German, in which case it is your duty to help them to stop fighting and to heal their wounds just as much as it is your duty to help your own comrades.

"And remember that while you are doing this work you are doing the work of the Master, and the power and the strength of the Master are with you so that nothing can hurt you. Only if you disobey orders and let your anger rise and attempt to injure anyone—only then could you be hurt. To put it shortly—obey orders and you are perfectly safe even if your work takes you into the middle of the whole German army. Disobey or let your passions lead you into hatred and anger and you will not be safe even if alone on an island in the Pacific Ocean. Do you understand?"

The Elder Brother drew himself up as if he were a soldier standing at "attention." The sergeant was much impressed and clicked his heels together as he saluted, saying,

"Your orders shall be obeyed, sir."

"Just a moment, Sergeant."

The Elder Brother stood very still for a moment, apparently thinking. He had stood in this attitude for about a minute when the door opened and a man

in the uniform of a Canadian soldier entered.

"You called, sir?"

"Yes. Please go with Sergeant Strew and show him how we do our work. You would not be called into active service so soon, Sergeant," the Elder Brother went on, addressing our friend, "but the Germans are about to start another drive and a great many on both sides will be killed; and we need all our workers and many more. I am sure that you will do what you can to help those whom you can influence to quit the fighting and turn their attention to other things, now that they are on this side of the veil."

Sergeant Strew and the Canadian saluted and went out.

What happened to the sergeant and the manner in which he was inducted into the work of the great band of invisible helpers who are striving with might and main to avert a grave disaster to the world, Jimmie learned later. It was replete with adventure and many terrible things, also some that were almost comic, but that is not really a part of this narrative.

The Elder Brother stood for a moment lost in thought after the departure of Sergeant Strew, and Jimmie watched him, waiting for him to speak. After a few minutes Jimmie broke the silence himself.

"You spoke of my having certain duties, too, sir?"

"Yes. But yours are different from those of the

sergeant. You are to learn as much as possible because the field of your activity will not be here. You are going back."

"Back?"

"Yes. You were not killed but only stunned, and when the right time comes you will be sent back to work in your own body again on the physical plane. There it will be your great and high privilege to tell, so far as lies in your power, the wonderful things which will be shown you and taught you here.

"But if I am not dead, then is not all this a dream? And Marjorie told me I was dead. Did I only imagine I saw Marjorie?"

"No. You really saw Marjorie and talked to her; also, you are really over here now, because it is not necessary that one die in order to come over to this country. Marjorie was mistaken and very naturally so; the fact is that for some little time is was uncertain whether it would be possible to re-integrate your etheric body quickly enough. But your work is needed on earth; you have earned the chance in your former lives and as there is a very great need, special help has been given you. Neither you nor Marjorie stopped to think that you have no wound."

"That's right," Jimmie said, "come to think of it I haven't any wound. I hadn't stopped to think of that before. And yet I remember that I've seen lots of dead men on the fields who had no wound."

"That is very true. They were killed by shell shock, and that is the very thing which *nearly* killed you by driving your vital body out of your physical almost to the point of rupturing the silver cord. But for the fact that you are needed and were given extra help, you would be really and absolutely dead, as you call it; you would be on this side of the veil with no chance of going back. But because in your past lives you made a start on the Path, took the vow of service, and by your work earned the opportunity for more service, it came to pass that when your etheric body was driven out by the explosion of the shell, the particles of your vital body were kept from utter disruption; and when the time comes for you to go back to the physical body which is even now lying in a hospital back of the lines, you will be helped to take with you the memory of what you have seen and heard here so that you can work to better advantage. In your sleep you have frequently seen and talked with Marjorie, and you have had many gliding trips with her in your dreams. But this time you were quite different, and it is no wonder that she was mistaken."

"But I have never dreamed of her, sir; it has always been one of the great regrets of my life."

"Yes! Although you never dreamed of her, yet you and she met often and had many long trips together, for during sleep we are generally away from our bodies in Dreamland, though very few are able

to take back the memory of their visits to this land of the living dead, and those who are beginning to be able to do so, take back, quite often, only distorted and mixed up memories. One of the things I hope you will soon learn to do when you go back is to carry your consciousness through."

"You say it can be done?"

"Indeed yes; it is far easier than it would seem and especially for souls that are well advanced. In fact it is a constant wonder to me that more people are not able to do it. You have earned the privilege of doing this during your last two or three lives, and it will not be a very difficult task for you to acquire the ability."

"My last two or three lives? What do you mean by that? Do you mean that I have lived before?"

"Exactly."

"Where?"

"On earth. And your last life was spent not so very far from where we are now, that is, it was in southern Europe."

"But I always thought that when one died, he died; and that he either went to heaven or to—to the other place."

"No! The scheme of human evolution is far greater and grander than that. And it is because it is so much more complex, and because of the great amount of work to be done and the fact that you can

be of great usefulness, that you are to be helped to go back. But first I want you to take a little trip with me."

He beckoned to Jimmie, who followed him outside and took his hand in obedience to a gesture. There was a period of rapid traveling during which Jimmie caught only faint glimpses of the parts of the earth over which they flew, and before a minute had elapsed they stood in a poorly furnished room where a woman sat sewing by a small table while two little children were playing on the floor beside her. As she sewed, the tears dropped slowly down her cheeks though she made no sound, only occasionaly looking towards the table where lay an open letter.

The Elder Brother stood very quietly in a corner. His grave face showed the pity which he felt, while Jimmie moved towards the table and glanced at the letter. It was the terse, formal, Government announcement that Henry L. E— had been mortally wounded in battle.

Instinctively he drew back in respect for a grief so great. As he did so, a man in uniform entered through the closed door and stood there, his hands outstretched towards the woman, who paid no attention to him. In his tunic, just over the heart there was a little round hole, and the tunic was stained with blood.

"O Emma," the newcomer broke the silence: "Emma!" he cried, with a little break in his voice.

The woman did not answer, but she seemed a little uneasy and raised her head as though listening for some expected or hoped-for sound. The youngest child crept on all fours towards the man in uniform, uttering little gurgles of welcome which with a few months more practice might have developed into the familiar "Daddy."

With a sob the woman caught up the child; "No, no, dear! Daddy hasn't come yet. He hasn't come yet!"

"The baby sees him," said the Elder Brother to Jimmie, "but the woman does not, and perhaps it is just as well. When she goes to sleep tonight," he said, turning to the man in uniform and touching him on the arm, "When she goes to sleep tonight she will leave her body and will be with you until she wakes in the morning. Then you will remember but she will not. Every night you will be able to meet her and talk to her, and so you can help her to bear the burden. In the meantime remember that your seperation is only temporary and that you will see her and be with her and the children every night when they are asleep. You see, your parting is only temporary, after all. She has much the heavier burden to bear."

The man in uniform held out his hand.

"Thank you, Mister. You've taken a heavy load off my mind."

The Elder Brother motioned to Jimmie and together they left by the now familiar glide, passing through the wall as though it had not been there. Outside they found themselves in the environs of a large city, and the Elder Brother chose a shaded side street, and moved along it slowly, almost walking. Not many people were on the street, and those they met paid no attention to them, evidently not seeing them. It caused Jimmie no little exertion at first to dodge pedestrians as they walked unconcernedly along the pavement. The Elder Brother, however, paid no attention to the people any more than they minded him, and walked right through them with as little concern as though they had been mere shadows. Jimmie watched him, then tried it himself and found to his relief that it caused him no inconvenience to walk through a person on the street, and that it was the only reasonable thing to do.

"I have shown you a little of the suffering caused by the war," the Elder Brother said at length, "not that you did not already know about it but merely to bring home to you the fact that the greater part of the agony caused by the conflict arises from the idea that death means a complete and probably permanent separation. In spite of the fact that most people would tell you, if you asked, that they firmly believe

in a future life, the fact remains that few of them believe in it to the point of realization.

"Death they can see and one-half of it they think they understand, but as to the life beyond they are more or less uncertain. If they could only know, not as a theory but as a fact, that they are spirits, children of the Great Father in heaven, and as such can no more die than He can, and if they could only realize that this life is not the only one on earth, but that humanity lives again and again in constantly improving bodies and surroundings, also that their progress is ever onward and upward, it could be much accelerated and they could be spared much suffering by thus working with the Great Law. If they could only realize that they make their own troubles, and that the misfortunes which they bear are not the visitations of a capricious deity but the results of their own disobedience to His Will (as shown in His great and just laws), either in their present life or in their past lives, and that just in proportion as they obey His moral law and practice the mode of conduct which Christ, the Great Master, laid down, just so far will they spare themselves suffering and fit themselves to be helpers in the great work of uplifting their fellows."

He ceased speaking, his face glowing with light, and as Jimmie noticed a nimbus or cloud of irridescent beauty and faintly flushing colors surrounding him,

there recurred to his mind an old verse which he had heard as a boy somewhere:

"How bright these glorious spirits shine."

"It is now nearly time for you to return," the Elder Brother continued, "and I cannot talk with you much more, so I will keep my promise and let you have a little time with Marjorie. But before we part I want to impress upon you that when you have recovered and are able to be about, I would like you to call on me in Paris."

He mentioned a street and number.

"But I thought—I thought you were—er—I thought you had—you see I thought you lived here altogether."

The Elder Brother laughed.

"No, indeed. I am still in the flesh, and when you are well enough I shall meet you in Paris and that will be one of the guarantees to you that all this is not a dream but a reality."

He began to travel rapidly, and Jimmie, following in obedience to a gesture of command, soon found himself on the same gently sloping meadow where he had first recovered consciousness.

"Marjorie will soon be here and I will leave you to her. She will explain some things to you, but you are not to look upon this meeting as our last nor on this as your only introduction to the land of the living dead. Your introduction to spiritual things has come

in a different manner than usual, but it is not a gift, for you have earned it, and it will be your duty to work *ten times harder* from now on.''

''He'll do it, too, won't you, Jimmie?''

Marjorie who had come up unnoticed, stood smiling in front of them. Jimmie grasped her hand and smiled too.

''Yes indeed, I will, sir.''

''Good-bye, then, for a while.''

Jimmie looked for Marjorie to say good-bye to the Elder Brother, but to his surprise they were alone.

''I've heard that you are to go back, and I'm so glad for it means that you will be able to work on both sides of the veil at once. O Jimmie, how I envy you your chances to work!''

The rest of Jimmie's conversation with Marjorie, while of absorbing interest to themselves, does not particularly concern our story, and it would be an abuse of our clairvoyant privileges to set it down. Jimmie spoke of his disappointment in the fact that he had not been shown the great sights which had been promised him nor given any instructions as to the ''work'' which he was to do.

Marjorie reassured him, and so absolute was her faith in the wisdom of the Elder Brother and so positive her assurances that Jimmie's doubts were set at rest.

His eyes had been growing heavier and heavier and

an overpowering drowsiness began to steal upon him for which he tried to apologize, but Marjorie only smiled at him His last recollection was the sight of her standing there, a faint glow surrounding her and a smile on her face as she said.

"You're going back!"

Then darkness seemed to cover all the Land of the Living Dead.

CHAPTER IV

Back to Earth—A Pretty Nurse

A SENSATION of falling; great swirling masses of darkness, felt, not seen; the impression of rushing through space at dizzy speed, alone, now head first, now feet foremost, utterly helpless to control the terrific plunge, yet with it all not uncomfortable nor particularly uneasy, merely curious to know the result of this unguided and precipitate excursion; dimly conscious of a lessening of the darkness and speed, a gradually increasing glow of twilight with no particular source and disclosing nothing in particular. Aeons of time were passing; a final appearance of the sun seen dimly through clouds and fog, and little by little a clearing of the vision. Ages passed and the clouds became lighter and more rosy; a final slow change of the sun into the glint of daylight on a swinging incandescent globe and the rosy clouds into a white ceiling and walls. Nothing more was visible. A shadow fell upon the wall, and across the range of vision moved the head of a young goddess wearing the uniform cap of the Red Cross.

She looked a little like Marjorie. . . Who was Marjorie? He tried to remember. The name came to him easily, Marjorie—Marjorie—who was Marjorie?

Who was he, himself? Jim, Jimmie—who was Jimmie? Where did he come from? Familiar name! They called him Jimmie. They? Who? Who were "they?" Marjorie called him Jimmie.

Who was that girl in the Red Cross cap who looked a little like Marjorie? She had stopped and was looking at him. No, she was not Marjorie. Marjorie was much prettier and Marjorie had a soft glow of light about her. Marjorie had seemed to be so much more *alive* than this girl and Marjorie glowed with light. This girl didn't glow. Probably not her fault. Naturally, few girls could glow like Marjorie—he smiled.

What was it that Marjorie had called it? Oh yes, an aura—aura.

The girl in the Red Cross cap was smiling at him now but she didn't glow like Marjorie. Still she had a sweet smile. She was a nice girl. He knew it. She ought to glow. He would speak to her.

A Red Cross nurse, passing on her rounds among her patients, saw one without a wound, who had lain unconscious for days, suffering from shell shock, but whom they had been unable to rouse, and as she glanced at him she was surprised and pleased at see-

ing his eyes open and that he showed consciousness. He was watching her and his lips were moving feebly. She stepped to his side and bent her head until her ear was close to his lips. Then, only, she could faintly hear his words.

"You're not glowing. Where's your aura?"

The mystified nurse stroked his forehead gently as she straightened up, a great surge of pity for this poor human wreck of battle sweeping over her. His lips moved again, and again she bent to listen.

" 'Scuse me. My mistake. You've got it."

"Go to sleep now, you're very much better."

She laid her hand on his head for a few moments, and then as his regular breathing showed that he had followed her direction, she moved away on her rounds. Later, in making her report to the head nurse she remarked that number 32 had regained consciousness but was apparently a little "off," as he had asked foolish questions about why she did not glow and where her aura was.

"What is an 'aura'?" she asked the head nurse. "It seems to me that I have heard the word somewhere."

"I don't know, child. I don't think there is any such thing. He's just out of his head."

Jimmie awoke from his sleep some hours later with his head fairly clear as to outward impressions but very confused as to other things. He went back over

his experiences with Sergeant Strew, the Elder Brother, and Marjorie. They were vivid and distinct and he could remember almost every word, especially Marjorie's, but how did he come to be here and where was "here?" There were no hospitals in the ordinary meaning of the term over there, yet he was in a hospital. Also the nurse walked and did not glide, and she had no aura though he remembered dimly that as she had bent over him when he first awoke and had touched his forehead so soothingly she had seemed to glow—yes, he remembered that she had all of a sudden been enveloped in a cloud of faint purple. He had said something to her at the time but he could not remember now what it was. He didn't care particularly. It was enough just to lie here quietly and not think at all—not more than he had to, anyhow. This place might or might not be heaven, but it certainly was very comfortable.

The nurse again stopped at his side. He smiled up at her, too comfortable and entirely satisfied to do more than smile. But she was a competent young woman and did not approve of nurses smiling at patients or patients at nurses. She wanted to know how he felt and what his temperature was and insisted on shaking up his pillow and generally rousing him in a gentle way. But he didn't care. Who could be annoyed by the attentions of a goddess? Now that he was aroused enough to talk, he would find out where

he was. He would go about it diplomatically so that she would not know what he was trying to find out. He spoke, and she was glad to hear his voice so much stronger.

"Why don't you glide?"

Poor fellow! His voice was stronger but evidently his mind was wandering. Still one can often accomplish a great deal by humoring such cases, so she answered:

"Why, don't you know that we're not allowed to dance in here, and besides, no one glides now. The only dances we have are the waltz and two or three other dance steps, but the glide is out of date.

He looked at her, puzzled. Maybe it wasn't heaven. Maybe it was—no—it couldn't be. Her face was too sweet and altogether wholesome for that.

"Tell me—say—" She bent down in sympathy at sight of so strong a man lying so helpless, in expectation of some piteous revelation of shattered reason.

"Where'm I at?"

The revulsion of feeling was too much for her and she laughed outright. When she could stop laughing long enough to talk she answered his question.

"You're in the American Hospital at Paris, France, and it's certain you're ever so much better—that is all except your grammar."

Again, in watching her, he saw that wave of color surround her like a glow of purple light and he

needed no words to tell him that though she might not glide nor know what an aura was, yet she was a true sister to those compassionate ones who spend their time in helping others even as the Master does. He knew, though he knew not how he knew, that such a glowing, pulsing, gentle, radiance cannot be counterfeited by any art, skill, knowledge, or power however great. Nothing can produce it but purity, kindliness, love, and service. So he was satisfied for the time and lay back on his pillow and in a few seconds was asleep.

It was a whole day later before he awoke again, this time in the full possession of his senses and memory, and when the nurse of the kindly face and the beautiful aura made her rounds, she met a look of full recognition which told her at a glance that Jimmie's mind was entirely restored.

"Good morning," she said smiling, "how's my shell shocked patient this morning? Still suffering from dislocation of grammar?"

Jimmie grinned, "What did I say to you yesterday?"

"Oh nothing much. You were naturally a little light headed and you said some queer things. You asked me why I didn't dance and where my aura was and why I didn't glow. By the way, what is an aura? Is there such a thing, or did you just imagine the word?"

"I don't know that I can tell you just what an aura is. I've heard the word and I think I know what it means. I'll tell you about it."

Three days later Jimmie was allowed to go out for a walk. He felt practically well and very hungry but had to promise that if allowed to go out he would not buy anything to eat.

"I don't know whether I can trust you or not," the doctor had said; "it may be better for Miss Louise to go with you.'

"I think very likely it would" said Jimmie thoughtfully, "I think it would be much better."

Miss Louise did not seem averse to a little walk when the doctor asked her if she would take her patient out for a stroll, and in fact appeared rather proud of the tall young lieutenant in his newly cleaned and pressed uniform from which all traces of the trench mud had been removed in the hospital laundry.

"Which way shall we go?" she asked as they passed out of the hospital gate.

"Do you know where the Rue de la Ex is?"

"No, but we can ask."

They asked. He asked in the best trench French, and she asked with a charming little hesitation in her accent and a most bewitching interrogatory raise of her eyebrows, but neither of them could make anything of the answers they received. The replies were

hidden in such a torrent of verbosity and gesticulation that they were left no wiser than before.

"I know what's the trouble," said Jimmie after the eighth or ninth native had left them in a maze of waving hands and shrugging shoulders.

"Oh what is it? I'm so mortified about my French!"

"Why it's all your fault."

"My fault?" her eyebrows went up in a distracting arch, "why?"

"Why, these natives take a look at you and get so excited they can't talk sense. I don't blame them either."

"Well I like that! Am I as bad looking as that?"

"I didn't say you were bad looking. I said they looked at you and got excited."

"Well! That's just the same as saying I'm bad looking. Thank you, Mister Lieutenant James Westman for your kind opinion."

"Fishing!"

"What do you mean, 'fishing'?"

Jimmie saw his mistake and was afraid. He had not realized how much her good opinion meant to him, and now that it was in danger he was distinctly nervous.

"Why, you know, Miss Louise, just what I mean. If you don't I'm going to tell you. I mean just this —say! you won't get mad if I tell you?"

"Why I'm mad now—quite mad. You said I am so ugly that nobody can look at me without getting excited."

"No, I didn't either, and I'm going to tell you now whether you get mad or not. What I mean is that you are so pretty that when anyone looks at you he just naturally—just—"

"Just what?"

"Just naturally loses his head, that's what. That's just what I do every time I look at you. Now get mad, if you want to."

Silence.

"Are you mad?"

More silence.

"Are you?"

Her head was averted but as he bent to listen he thought he caught the words,

"Not very."

Jimmie's nature was to be carried away by his enthusiasm when he was greatly interested in a subject and he was carried away now.

"And I'll tell you more and you can get mad if you want to, just as mad as you like. I know I've no right to say it, but I think it and I say you're the prettiest and sweetest and the nicest and the dearest girl in—in—" before Jimmie's memory flashed the picture of that other girl—dancing, tripping, airy, gliding, glowing Marjorie, golden Marjorie, sweet-

voiced gentle Marjorie, and he hesitated in his speech. Was he true, he wondered. His conscience smote him a little. Was it right to make love to two girls? He faltered. "In France," he ended lamely.

Louise noted the falter in his voice. She did not know whether she was in love with this man or not. She had not tried to analyze her feelings, but she had thought that she was going to hear a proposal, and she was disappointed. This falter in his voice was too much of an anti-climax in his somewhat fiery speech, and while she did not understand, yet she was at a loss how to explain in any other than the ordinany way; clearly he had a sweetheart at home. Gently she disengaged herself from his grasp and slowly turned towards him.

"I—I—think I'd better go now, Mr. Westman." There was just the faintest trace of a catch in her voice.

"Louise! Oh Louise! Don't think that of me. I know what you are thinking of, but it's all a mistake dear. "Won't you listen to me?"

She hesitated, provoked that he had tried to make love to her while he had a sweetheart in America, yet unwilling, too, to break with him entirely until she was sure that there was no misunderstanding.

"Well Mr. Westman, what do you wish to say?"

"I say you're the sweetest girl in the world!"

"In France, you mean?"

"No, in the whole wide world."

"Are you sure?. Don't you mean in France?"

"No! I'm sure, and I mean anywhere!"

"How about the girl back home?"

"There isn't any!"

She looked at him meditatively at first, then with a little touch of contempt in her glance. He saw it and began to realize that his situation was desperate. Like a flash of light the realization came upon him that he loved this girl and must not lose her. He *must* not.

"Then why did you stammer so just now?"

"I'll tell you and you'll understand everything. Please listen to me, won't you?"

"I'm listening now but I'm not hearing very much."

"Well, I can explain all about it as we walk back."

"Oh, I don't know, Mr. Westman, I'm not sure that I care to waste time over things that have to be 'explained.' I think you are strong enough to take care of yourself now, and I have an errand I want to do anyhow, so I'll leave you here and hurry along."

She left him in spite of his protests, and turned down a side street while Jimmie, loitering on the corner, watched her in the hope that she might relent and turn or look back. But he watched in vain.

Sadly he turned toward the hospital. There was nowhere else for him to go. He did not care to visit

a club or Y. M. C. A. for he was too sore and hurt to mix in a crowd of soldiers. He wanted only to be alone and to think up something to say to her that would change her mind. Suddenly the Elder Brother's words recurred to him:

"Your introduction to spiritual things has come in an unusual way, but it is not a gift for you have earned it, and it will be your duty to work *ten times harder* from now on."

He saw now that he had wholly forgotten his promise and the great work, whatever that might be, that was contained in the magic word "duty." He had somehow carelessly come to look upon his wonderful experiences as upon a dream. He had started out to find the address given by the Elder Brother and had calmly let everything go, in order to make love to a girl! Oh, but such a pretty girl! Thus he justified himself. This was undoubtedly a tangle. He was in love with two girls, both beautiful and sweet and altogether lovely, but one on earth and one in—in—well, say in Paradise. He could marry only one. Would that offend the other? Would Louise believe him when he told her of his other love and would she be jealous or not? He thought, or at least he hoped, that she cared for him, but such a story as his would be hard for her to believe.

Oh! the thought just struck him; The Elder Brother could straighten out this tangle providing

there really were such a man. He did not know, himself, whether to believe his memory or not, and if *he* had any doubts, how could he expect Louise to believe? Was there an Elder Brother, or was his great adventure but another cloud of the stuff that dreams are made of? Stupid! There was proof—sure proof—if he could only find it—proof that would convince even Louise no matter how skeptical she might be. Hurrah! He would put his dream to the test and proof which the Elder Brother himself had suggested, and in doing so he would prove it to himself and to Louise at the same time.

Some French children playing in the street were astonished to see a lieutenant of "Les Amis" strolling slowly along the pavement, break suddenly into a run as if his very life depended upon his speed.

Louise had not yet returned to the hospital when Jimmie forced himself to saunter leisurely in at the gate, but he determined to lose no opportunity and sat down in an easy chair to wait for her.

Louise came in, feeling repentant for her exhibition of temper. After all, Jimmie was suffering from shell shock and such patients are not always fully responsible for their actions. Her vigorous walk by herself had done her good, and the brisk circulation which it had induced had made her more charitable by sweeping some of the cobwebs from her brain; and

also it had brought the roses to her cheeks, though of course she was unaware of the fact.

Jimmie sprang from his chair as she entered or at least he would have sprung if he could. As it was he got up as quickly as possible and came to meet her, and whether or not there are such things as auras and whether or not Louise would have recognized one if she had seen it, the fact remains that before Jimmie could speak a word she knew that every atom of his being was vibrant with apology and inquiry, reminding her of nothing so much as a big, playful, lovable puppy in an agony of endeavor to please. Could she refuse to speak to him for a few minutes? No, of course she would hear what he had to say, though he must hurry for she went on duty in half an hour.

And so Jimmie, who had made up his mind that the only way was to tell her exactly how matters stood, led her out into the little garden where a recreation ground had been made for the convalescent patients, and there poured into her ears the story of his adventures from the time he found himself walking along the meadow until he finally awoke in the hospital. She listened with interest, especially when he spoke of Marjorie.

"And so you see," he explained, "how very important is is that I should find that address, because if

there is such a street and such a number and if there is a man named Campion living there, then it will prove the truth of all that I have told you and he will be able to help me out and convince you that the story is true."

"There is no need of that, Mr. Westman, because whether or not the things you have told me really happened does not effect your truthfulness at all. I believe every word you have said and I think it wonderful. How I should like to see some of those beautiful colors you speak of. And Marjorie, too; she must be a dear!"

Jimmie's heart throbbed violently at the joyful revelation that she accepted his story as true and consequently forgave him for his loyalty to Marjorie. It was evident that Louise did not believe in the actual truth of his account, but so intense and earnest had been his manner in narrating his experiences that, though she considered the whole story the figment of a brain suffering from shell shock, she was firmly convinced that *he* believed it. That was all she really cared about, for it explained his hesitation and accounted for his loving another girl as well as herself, a thing which she could in no wise have forgiven except for the fact that the other girl was merely a

creature of the imagination and had no existence in reality.

"Louise! Say Louise!"

"Well?"

"Gee! I'm glad we've had this talk. You know I've been afraid you were mad at me."

"So I was. I thought you were trying to flirt with me while all the time you had a sweetheart back home."

"I don't blame you. But now that you know all about it, you've forgiven me, haven't you?"

"Why, Mr. Westman, how absurd! There was nothing to forgive."

"But I believe when you thought I had a sweetheart at home you cared a little bit or else you wouldn't have got mad. Say! Louise!" he dwelt on the word, pronouncing it lingeringly. "Louise—"

"Well?"

"Don't you think, maybe, after a while, after you know me a little better——"

"Well?"

"Don't you think—maybe—perhaps—you might come to care a little more?"

Silence. He took her hand as she turned her face away.

"Couldn't you?"

"Maybe—"

The next day Jimmie sought and obtained permission for another walk and for Louise to accompany him, which he assured the doctor was a necessity on account of the dizzy spells which might seize him at any time. The doctor demurred at first and kindly offered to send an orderly with him or another convalescent soldier who would not be subject to "spells," but Jimmie's consternation was so evident that being very human and a kindly enough man, the doctor gave the necessary permission and then disgusted Jimmie by showing a quite superfluous anxiety in the matter, through an alleged fear that the "spells" might be the result of heart disease.

Louise and Jimmie had studied the map of Paris in the meantime and had found that there actually was a Rue de la Ex, but this proved nothing,for he might have heard the name somewhere and the subjective mind with its wonderful memory might have brought that particular name out of all the rubbish with which it was loaded and have presented it to his shell shocked imagination. Jimmie knew, or thought he knew, a great deal about the subjective mind and carefully explained the matter to Louise as they walked along, but it is a question as to whether his somewhat technical language enlightened her to any great extent. Even if it did it must be confessed that her interest in the mysteries of the subjective mind was not particularly intense.

Before a certain house in the Rue de la Ex they halted. The house was there, but that proved nothing. The front door was in an arched passage way which led to an inner courtyard. They rang the bell. A rattling of the door announced that someone inside was in the act of opening it. The next few moments would decide the matter.

CHAPTER V

The Elder Brother in the Flesh

JIMMIE and Louise awaited the opening of the door with similar forebodings. Louise did not believe a single word of the wonderful story which Jimmie had told her, though she was firmly convinced that Jimmie himself believed it. Jimmie on the other hand, with his vivid memory of the adventure was certain that it had really happened, but was distrustful of the outcome of this physical and concrete test, and was wondering what excuse he could give if, as he feared, the house should prove to be tenanted by strangers.

Louise expected the door to be opened by an ordinary concierge and that the inevitable disillusionment would follow; she was trying to determine in her own mind what she could say to help Jimmie over his disappointment.

Jimmie feared much the same thing and was casting about for a plausible reason to give Louise for the collapse of his peculiar vision and was finding himself quite unsuccessful in the attempt, when the door opened.

Before them, with a welcoming and slightly quizzical smile as though he had in some way divined their perplexities, stood the man of his dream, identical in every particular of dress and feature with the strange and powerful being who had become familiar to him in the Land of the Living Dead by the appellation of the "Elder Brother."

Mutely accepting his cordial invitation they entered a well furnished library, and not until then did Jimmie recover sufficiently from his bewilderment to introduce his companion. With some embarrassment he presented Mr. Campion to Miss Louise Clayton, with the brief statement that Miss Clayton was the nurse who had taken care of him during his recovery; that he had told her of his great adventure, and had asked her to accompany him on this expedition.

"I am very glad that you did so, Lieutenant Westman, for Miss Clayton was selected as your nurse for several reasons, not the least of which was the fact that she is quite an advanced soul and it was determined that the work of re-integrating your vital body would be more easily and quickly done with her help than through any other of the available nurses. You see, Miss Clayton, I am quite well acquainted with you though we have never met before."

Louise answered politely and somewhat formally but was unable to quite conceal her incredulity at the statement which Mr. Campion had made.

"Nevertheless," Mr. Campion continued as though answering some objection, "you were selected and the wisdom of the choice is apparent in the result. You have a strong and well developed aura, and your vibrations are harmonious, owing to certain stellar combinations of which you are probably unaware; that was a great help when Jimmie here (I am not going to call him Lieutenant) was recovering consciouness. You will, perhaps remember that as you bent over him to make out what he was mumbling, he asked you why you didn't glow and where your aura was and then immediately apologized by assuring you that you *did* glow?"

Louise was perplexed. No one else had been present to overhear that whispered conversation. The head nurse had not been out of the hospital and so could not have hunted up this man and told him of it, besides she had not told the head nurse much and had not spoken of it at all to any one else. Jimmie she was sure, had not been out of the hospital grounds except the one time when they had almost quarreled. Could he have written to this man or was the man a mind reader? If Jimmie had written, then he was deceiving her. If the man was a mind reader, then he was an uncannily shrewd one. She

did not know what to say and so kept silent, but her glances roved about the room.

Mr. Champion spoke:

"Miss Clayton, you will pardon me, I am sure, if I endeavor to set your mind at rest and, incidentally, Jimmie's also. In doing so it will be necessary to make some statements which cannot be proven to you now and the explanation of which would require too much time, so I am going to ask you to hear me patiently and reserve your judgment until later.

"To begin with, I must assure you that you are not the victim of any prepared plot and that Jimmie has not written to me nor did the head nurse give a second thought to what you told her." Louise looked up quickly, her eyes wide with wonder. "Then, too, your surprise at meeting a mind reader without the usual trappings of his trade was perfectly natural.

"There are here none of the customary paraphernalia of the professional wonder worker, and you looked in vain for skulls and stuffed owls and somber drapery. I assure you that while mind reading is not at all difficult to the trained occultist, yet I was not reading your mind when I spoke of your few words with Jimmie when he regained consciousness I know what you said because I was there at the time—"

Louise looked up, again with a gesture of surprise, and started to speak but remembered his request.

"I was there, although you did not see me and I followed you when you went to make your report to the head nurse. If you remember, she was sitting at a desk writing and when you spoke to her you were alone in the office with her. She did not turn around but merely stopped writing when you spoke to her. Then she answered you, 'I don't think there is such a thing, child.' Also, as you passed out of the office you met two orderlies bringing in a wounded man on a stretcher and just then one of them stumbled. You thought he was going to drop his burden and you gave a little gasp and started forward—There!" he smiled at her, "I think I have fully exonerated our friend here, for he could not have written me these things."

Louise made an inimitably graceful little gesture of surrender.

"And now for the reason underlying all these strange doings. The human race is made of a multitude of individual spirits who are evolving or learning by repeated rebirths into physical bodies on the physical plane, where they learn to obey the great laws of our Father in heaven just as children learn their lessons day by day in school. In this great scheme of evolution we are subject to the operation of two great laws: First, that of rebirth, which brings us back to the concrete physical world again and again, in constantly, though slowly improving

bodies and surroundings. Second the law of consequence which decrees that we must suffer the natural results of our mistakes, which are usually called sins, even though many lives may sometimes intervene between the mistake and its result.

"In order that this period of birth and death and learning and suffering may be shortened, as much help as possible is given the race by great hosts of spiritual beings who have themselves passed through similar schools. There are times (just as there are examinations in every school), when a turning point in evolution is reached, and the race is, as we might say, examined or quizzed to see which classes of entities are worthy of promotion.

"This great war is the most tremendous turning point yet reached in human evolution, and the need of the race for help and instruction is greater than ever before. Help can be given in some respects more effectively by advanced members of the same race, and for that reason many individuals are being promoted just now for the assistance and teachings which they are able to give. The need is tremendous—much more so than either you or Jimmie realize, and it was because of this fact that Jimmie was sent back to the physical life, for he would otherwise have remained permanently on the other side. It is for this reason that you have been brought here with him for you must not think that it is the custom of occultists

to give displays of power merely in order to entertain people.

"You and Jimmie are both advanced souls (I am not saying this to flatter either of you) and in a few more lives would naturally reach the point to which it is hoped you will presently attain in this life if you are willing to work. Help will be given you, but you must remember the words of the Master that 'Unto whom much is given, of him much will be required.' So the choice of engaging in the work must be a purely voluntary one and not be made lightly, for as the benefit is great if we receive this teaching worthily, so is the danger great if we receive the same unworthily."

Jimmie and Louise glanced at each other, both recognizing the allusion to that beautiful sentence in the communion service. Jimmie spoke:

"You said something to me before, sir, about the great work, but you did not say what it was."

"No. For some time it was uncertain whether your etheric body could be re-integrated in time, and when that was accomplished there was no opportunity for instruction."

For more than an hour Mr. Campion went on, telling them about the different planes of being and the different bodies corresponding to those planes, and outlining the work of the Invisible Helpers with both the living and the dead. Louise and Jimmie

listened with wonder which gradually changed into awe as the tremendous Plan was sketched out for them. Never had they heard the like of it and yet it all seemed strangely familiar, just as though they ought to have known it anyway. As Mr. Campion proceeded and showed how it all fitted in with the Scriptures and particularly with the words spoken by the Christ, explaining the parables and throwing light into the dark and hidden places, Louise began to realize that all her doubts were swept away and felt ashamed that her mind had ever harbored them. No longer did she think of "proofs." No proofs were needed. No man, however great, could have invented such a scheme as this. Not even Mr. Campion, mind reader and occultist or whatever he was, could have originated such a complicated, interlocking plan. He did not need to assure her that it was true. She *knew* it though she did not realize how she knew it. It bore the imprint and signature of Divinity itself.

Jimmie, too, had listened, absorbed. The things Mr. Campion was telling them explained some of the apparent contradictions which he had observed during his brief stay on the other side, and when the theory and practice of attaining the freedom of the other planes of being were detailed, he began to understand that it really is not necessary to die in order to prove immortality.

"But why was it, then," he asked, "if there is all this hard work to be done on the other side—why was so much trouble taken to send me back?"

"Because the crying need is for those on this side of the veil who know the fact of immortality, who have visited the other country and have returned, who are willing and able to make their knowledge known, who can comfort the dying and more especially those who are left behind. The need is for those who can say, 'I know,' as well as, 'I believe.'"

"Then if I persist in the exercises you have outlined, you think that I can develop my spiritual sight?"

"Undoubtedly you can, and while I must not influence you one way or the other, since the choice must be of your own free will, yet you know how I long to meet you again as a volunteer in the Great Army in which you are enlisted anyhow."

Jimmie felt that it was a very serious moment. He wanted to help. His heart flowed out in sympathy with those who are suffering and dying and yet——yet—that thing of "living the life"—could he do it? When he got back to his regiment and his company—could he keep it up? Then a doubt crept into his mind. Mr. Campion had said, or had as good as said, that in sleep almost every one helps, more or less, so why could he not do whatever was possible

during conscious hours and trust to being an unconscious invisible helper during sleep?

Mr. Campion sat, watching them. Louise was looking at him but not watching him. Her eyes had that "far away" expression which showed that her mind was busy with other things, as quickly became evident when she spoke.

"Please tell me, Mr. Campion, if you will, just why the embodied worker who has the freedom of the other planes is so much more valuable than the disembodied worker or the worker who cannot consciously visit the higher worlds—does it not have something to do with the will power?"

"You have the idea, Miss Clayton. The embodied worker has a power which the same man, having lost his body by death does not have. The explanation is a long one but you have come very near the mark when you speak of will power. Also, the worker on the other side is dealing largely with those who have just passed over, whose day in school is done, and whose period of reviewing the physical life has commenced. The worker on this side of the veil, however, may be able to influence the lives of many, causing them to refrain from things which they otherwise would do and to avoid much of the pain of purgatory by leaving undone, actions which would have brought on them a great debt of destiny."

Jimmie and Louise walked back to the hospital very quietly. Each was busy thinking and their oc-

casional intervals of conversation were to review some of the things Mr. Campion had said.

Just before they reached the big gate Louise spoke:

"Jimmie! I have a confession to make."

"What is it?"

"Do you know, before we went into that house I really did not think that your adventure was anything but imagination. I thought it was just one of those 'shell shock' dreams."

"I was afraid you did."

"But you needn't be afraid any longer. I believe every word of it now."

The very excusable pleasure which Jimmie showed plainly in his face and which arose entirely from satisfaction at having his story finally believed must have caused the old French porter at the gate to draw some highly erroneous conclusions—judging from the smile with which his wrinkled old face was wreathed as Jimmie and Louise entered the hospital; or else, it is possible, we may have failed to overhear the entire conversation.

* * *

Back once more with his company and after the hearty greetings and congratulations at his escape were over, Jimmie settled down to the steady grind of drill and training which took up a considerable part of the time, even though they were now in a "rest billet" behind the lines.

The everyday, well known affairs of the now familiar army life, the constant contact with his men and his brother officers with all of whom he was a prime favorite, tended to dull the keen edge of his enthusiasm, and prosaic, commonplace thoughts usurped the place of the high ideals and noble aspirations which had so thrilled him. The glamour of his trip into the Land of the Living Dead began to pale somewhat. Pressing, urgent duties, insistent, demanding duties claimed his time. When drill and the various forms of training were over, he was tired and only too willing to be swept along with the crowd on a visit to the "Y" or some entertainment. Always he tried to quiet his conscience with the promise that he would do something in earnest soon, just as soon as he got well rested.

In the meantime, as he had promised, he kept up the foolishly simple little exercise that Mr. Campion had given him and which he went through with every night just as regularly as clockwork, though he could not see, to save his life, how so ridiculously elementary a thing could have any great effect upon him. It stood to reason, he thought, that Mr. Campion was wrong, else why should not this exercise be widely known? Why did not some of the ministers of the different churches know about it and teach it? He knew, that some of the criticism leveled at the heads of ministers was deserved, but he knew that, taken as a whole and averaging them up, the ministers were honest and conscientious and doing their best

according to their light. Why, then, did they not know of such a thing if it were really true?

He was seated one afternoon, writing in a corner of the "Y". Not many men were there but close to him an elderly and somewhat over zealous secretary was taking to task a little group of soldiers who were evidently remiss in their attendance at the services. These men had been in battle. They had seen their comrades die—wounded—blown to atoms—gassed, gasping with raw and bleeding lungs for one breath of air they could not seem to reach. These men had seen their friends, young, brave, with all of life before them, suddenly die, and the effect of such experiences had produced in them a broader or a deeper or a higher, at any rate, a different, attitude toward the great enigma of life.

The secretary had just come over and was full of zeal to save the souls of these poor, lost wanderers, to snatch the brands from the burning. They must come and be saved. They must put on salvation. They must accept Christ or forever they would burn in hell as children of the devil. They must become converted and filled with grace before it was too late and the bottomless pit yawned for them with the everlasting fires and—

"Oh, can that brimstone stuff!"

This interruption of a new voice with an evident note of impatience in it caught Jimmie's attention and he looked around at the speaker with interest.

CHAPTER VI

A Doughboy's Ideas on Religion

THE tone of voice of the last speaker attracted the attention of our friend Jimmie and he listened with interest.

"What—what—what do you mean?" stammered the horrified secretary.

"Just that. Can that everlasting fire stuff. It isn't logical and it isn't scriptural and it isn't Christian and it isn't in the Bible anyway, and a God who would act the way you say He does would be a devil and not a God."

It was a tall, lean doughboy who spoke. The interval of silence caused by a stupefaction of the horrified secretary, who really could not believe his ears and was dumb from amazement, gave Jimmie a chance to take a hurried glance at the group before the doughboy continued:

"Who is God, anyhow?"

"Who is God! Who is God! Oh, my poor, poor brother! Can you be so ignorant as to ask that question?"

"You bet I can! You seem to know a lot about Him, at least you are allowing that you do. Now

tell me just who He is and what is His business."

"Who is He? Oh, dear, dear! With a rod of iron he rules the world and breaks in it pieces like a potter's vessel. He made you and He gave his only Son to die for you to save you from eternal damnation, and you ask who He is!"

"Now listen to me, parson. I don't mean to be unkind and I don't mean to be irreverent, but I've been through that hell out yonder and I saw my chum, the finest fellow that ever wore shoe leather and the bravest man—" here he glared around the little circle as though challenging any one to deny the fact—"the bravest man that ever lived. I saw him hit with a shell which took both his legs off, and he died right there in my arms and he didn't have a chance. I saw him die and I've got to go back when this thing is over, if I'm alive, and tell his wife and his mother how he died. And you tell me that God made the world and rules the world and He allows things like this war to happen? Why didn't He stop it? If He is as great and holy as you say, why didn't He stop the men who began this thing?"

"My poor, poor, ignorant brother. God did not permit this war. It was the devil, that great Adversary, who brought this on."

"Then God doesn't rule the world! He made us but He made such a poor job He had to send His

only Son to die to save us, and even at that He only saves a few—by your own reckoning the great majority are going to hell; I heard you say so when you spoke of the broad, easy way that leads to destruction."

"Oh, but, my brother, that is all in the Bible. Do you mean to deny the Word of God?"

"I don't know just what I'm denying, but I don't believe the Bible says that at all. I believe you go to the Bible and get out of it just what you happen to want to get out of it and not what the Bible wants to give you. Now you listen to me for a moment and tell me if I make a mistake. God is almighty. Is that so?"

"Yes, yes, it is indeed and—"

"Now just wait a minute, parson, if you'll excuse me, it's my inning right now and I am after getting at the truth if I can. Now to start over again—God is almighty—that means He is able to do anything?"

"Yes indeed."

"And I heard a minister say once that He is omnipotent?"

"Yes."

"That means that He is almighty but it means a lot more too."

"Gee! You're a regular lawyer!" was the admiring interjection from another soldier in the group.

"Well, I studied law a lot and practiced a little too, but I never trained for this kind of a fight."

"Now, my brother, let me give you some tracts to read—"

"No parson, I don't want to read any tracts. They all shy away from the big questions. You began this thing and I want you to stand up like a man and see it through because I'm not trying to damage religion any. I'm really and honestly looking for light, but I want real light—sunlight—not any of your tallow candle variety. I want to get at the truth. I've been in hell out there past the trenches and I've walked face to face with death and so have all these boys here, and we are looking for truth—fact—true truth, not any counterfeit. Now I am right here to tell you, parson, that my eternal happiness is worth just as much to me as yours is to you, and I'm not trying to shock you—I want the truth—so do all these boys."

"But, brother, I have told you. Accept Christ—put on the Gospel armor and you can resist all the wiles of the enemy."

"There you go, parson, evading the issue. The questions are: Who is God, why did He make us, why did He allow this war to come on?"

"Oh, but you are wrong. He didn't allow it. It is all against his will—"

"Against His will and He omnipotent? No, parson, you've got to try again."

"But I tell you, brother, you must come humbly to the throne of grace. Accept Christ with the right hand of fellowship and even now you may be saved."

The tall soldier looked at the secretary for a moment, gave a sigh and turned away.

"It always ends this way," he said to another of the group; " I never knew a parson who could hold up his end in a real discussion with any one who wants to know the real truth if there is such a thing to be known. They always shirk and dodge. So long, parson," he said pleasantly as he passed out of the building.

Jimmie hastily folded his letter, stuck it in his pocket, and followed. Here, perhaps, was a chance to begin on the great work. The Elder Brother had said that the work would not be forced on him but that he would be given chances to work if he were in earnest. Perhaps this was a chance. He overtook the man, who quietly saluted as he fell into step with him.

"I overheard part of your talk with the secretary," said Jimmie, "and I want to ask you, if I may, whether you were really in earnest when you said that you wanted to know the truth?"

"You bet I was, Lieutenant, but I never can get a minister to answer the questions I want to ask, and yet they seem reasonable to me."

"I think I can answer your questions. If you will let me take the parson's place, and anyhow I think we would enjoy the discussion."

"All right, sir."

The tone was a resigned one, and Jimmie sensed the situation. The tall soldier had told the truth when he said that he wanted light but was disgusted at the idea that a very youthful second lieutenant should take up the scanty leisure of a tired soldier with a lot of useless discussion on a subject of which he must be completely ignorant. He (the soldier) had applied frequently for light to the regularly appointed light-bearers and had received—darkness. For this second lieutenant to presume to have what none of the ministers had was like a grammar school boy offering to teach a major-general the rudiments of strategy. However, the tall soldier was good-natured and decided to put up with the infliction for a few minutes to see what the lieutenant had to say.

Jimmie said after a little awkward silence:

"You know, I felt sorry for that poor secretary back there; you put some hard questions to him."

The tall soldier chuckled:

"They did kinda get his goat, didn't they?"

"They sure did. Yet the answers are very simple."

"I wish you'd give them."

"Well—ask your questions."

"Is there a life after death?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"Because I've been there and come back."

"Gee! You scored that time, maybe. But here's another: How do you know that you've been there and come back?"

"I thought you would ask that question. I know that I have been over there and come back because I have met and talked with people there whom I knew in earth life, and also because I met and talked with a man there whom I had never known before but who had not laid aside his physical body, and by following his instructions I have met him in the physical body afterwards. Still, I fully recognize the fact that what is proof to me is not proof to you, because you have only my word for it; and even if you knew me well and did not doubt my word, yet there is a large margin for error of judgment, so that strictly speaking there can be no 'proof' for you except through your own experience. But, there may be a secondary proof, circumstantial evidence as you might say, which would be ten times more convincing 'proof' than anything I might tell you, even if you did not doubt my word."

"Just what do you mean?"

"I mean this: You have been told from your childhood that there is a God, that He is wisdom, knowledge, love, etc. You see certain facts in the world around you which you find hard to reconcile with

such an idea of God. You see injustice, misery, war, pain, sorrow, parting; you see some who are lucky all their lives and some who are unlucky through no fault of their own. You see all these things and you naturally want to know why they exist in a world which has been created by a Being whose name is love. Since they do exist and since they are not the evidences of love, you argue that God either does not exist at all or that He is lacking in some of the attributes you have always ascribed to Him or that there is a Rival Power of darkness, almost, if not quite, as powerful as God. Is that not so?"

"That's the case exactly, Lieutenant."

"You ask for the reasons why such things are allowed in the world and you are met with evasions and platitudes which show you that the men who are supposed to know most about the things of God are really as ignorant as yourself but not honest enough to admit it. They believe certain things on what seems to you to be insufficient evidence, and they wish you to believe just what they do but are wholly unable to answer any of your questions and even resent the asking of the questions. Yet the whole matter becomes plain as day when you realize that we are all evolving spirits, parts of God just as the Bible says, who are growing in experience and knowledge and power through living many lives on earth, one after another. We are subject to two great

laws, first, that of rebirth which brings us back again and again to life on the physical plane, and second, that of consequence which decrees that we must reap just what we sow— again just as the Bible tells us. In between our earth lives we are in another state of consciousness in which the experience of the past life is incorporated into our spirit as conscience. Sin is the result of ignorance of God's laws, and the resultant suffering in time teaches us how to obey these laws, just as a child that has burnt its finger learns to avoid a hot stove. But some are fortunate because they have progressed farther on the path of evolution than others, have learned more lessons, and are able to live more nearly according to God's law. Others are unfortunate because in past lives they have done wrong and have laid up more of a debt; or rather because they have not progressed as far upon the path of evolution and so have not paid off as many of their debts, for no one in all God's universe is called upon to suffer anything which he has not deserved by his actions in the past; but you must remember that the past extends over hundreds of lives. In the great scheme of human evolution there are great turning points where extra help is given. This war is one of those points and was allowed to come on because the race was becoming bogged in materialism, and a great shock was needed to turn the thought of humanity

back to the only real thing in the world, which is the study of the laws of God and the attempt to obey them. And the laws of God were never better summarized than by Christ when He said to love God supremely and thy neighbor as thyself. Do I make myself plain?''

''Y-e-s, but if I have lived before, why don't I remember it?''

''Well, the causes which operate to prevent your remembering your past lives are complex and would take a long time to explain. But the fact remains that it is a merciful provision of nature, because if you *did* remember all your past lives you could not advance at all, for the old loves and hates of the past would compel you to wrong actions. A boy in school uses a slate until he is past the primary grades and does not make many mistakes in figures. Later on he discards his slate and uses pencil and paper, and still later he uses ink. So with us. When we learn to live right and not make so many mistakes, when we are freer from the passions of hatred and revenge, we shall remember all our past lives.''

''It seems to be all right but I can't see why I don't remember if I have lived before.''

''Think it over and maybe you will see.''

Jimmie judged it best to drop the subject here and left the man to go on his way. He was disappointed, too, for to his enthusiasm the inability to see so

plain a matter was a little disheartening. He had not realized the fact that each one has his limitatations and that the limitations of one are at a different distance from the center than those of another. A large circle can contain a smaller and can comprehend it and the fact that there is space beyond the confines of the smaller circle, but the smaller one cannot comprehend the large one until it has learned to reason from the existence of still smaller circles that there may be something beyond its own limitations. It is easy for us to see the limitations of others but hard to see our own until we learn first to cast out the beam which is in our own eye before we attempt to remove the moat which is in our brother's eye.

And now began for Jimmie a life in which he found little time for the particular work he was so anxious to do. His regiment was sent back to the trenches and the strenuous life and the little real privacy and quiet which he could command hindered his attempts to further his own advancement. He did, however, manage to perform, most of the time the simple exercises which Mr. Campion had given him and managed to say a few words about the higher life now and then when the chance offered. But the excitement of the actual fighting, for his regiment was brigaded with a British army contingent and was holding back the German advance in the spring of 1918, focused his attention almost

wholly upon military affairs. The matter, though, was in stronger hands than his, and one day, in a charge to retake a trench, he received a bullet in his right arm and was sent back to a hospital, fuming at his ill luck.

In this hospital there was no Louise, and he had been there hardly long enough to get his wound well dressed before he received orders to sail at once for America for instruction duty in one of the big training camps. He tried in vain for long enough leave to hunt up Miss Clayton, but the situation was urgent and his orders were peremptory. He wrote a despairing letter to Mr. Campion but received no reply and was forced to board a returning transport, in charge of a small contingent of wounded men, his great work undone, Louise and Mr. Campion left behind in France, his comrades still fighting tooth and nail to hold the grey flood, and himself in what he bitterly asserted to be perfect physical condition, forced to go home before the war was won.

Oh, the bitterness of that embarkation, leaving behind him in France the Great War in which he wished to continue, the girl whom he had grown to love and the man to whom he looked for guidance in the great work which he had dimly sensed! Leaving behind all the great activities which had entered his life and had changed it so completely, leaving it all for what? A safety which he despised, a work which he

felt others could do far better than he, a life of unwelcome ease and that dreadful, gnawing sense of separation from those whom he wished to be near.

Jimmie went aboard the transport, weighed down with a feeling of injustice and calamity. His arm gave him considerable trouble for it was encased in a sling most of the time, and yet he knew that at the front he would have hardly noticed such pain as it caused. But now little things annoyed him and trifles seemed important, and he grew, not peevish, for Jimmie had naturally too sunny a disposition for that, but less buoyantly joyful than he had generally been. He spent as little time out of his cabin as possible and was generally supposed to be suffering more from the shell shock than from the wound in his arm. As shell shock is a most peculiar thing and acts in a thousand different ways, his little foibles were passed over without remark and he was humored in them to the greatest possible extent.

The ship had been two nights and two days at sea and it was late in the evening of the third day, long after dark, that he stood at the rail alone looking wistfully out over the water. The moon was rising, a brand new moon, giving too little light to dim the beauty of the friendly stars. The breeze was blowing gently from the southward and the great ship drove through the darkness without even the glimmer of a light to mark her way, heaving slowly and

gently to the long, easy swells and rolling with something of dignity in her motion as though in a dim way she sensed her separate existence and the value of the precious human freight she bore.

Jimmie leaned against the rail drinking deep breaths of the salty air which tasted so clean and fresh after the reek of No-Man's-Land, fouled, with human hatred and the wrecks of human war, and watched each long, low roller brimming slowly to the vessel's side and raising her so easily, so quietly, as though the lifting of a score of thousand tons of weight were the merest play. The exhibition of such tremendous power slowly brought into Jimmie's mind, torn with grief and disappointment, a feeling of calmness and rest, and when he looked from the ocean to the sky and watched the great stars shining quietly above him as they had shone above Columbus and the sailors of the Spanish Main, as they had shone above Rome and Carthage, above Babylon and Baalbec, above the builders of the pyramids and the armies and the navies of old Atlantis, he felt stealing over him a faint perception of that great Power whose Being they attested and whose majestic purpose could not be thwarted a hair's breadth even by the great upheaval of all the peoples of the globe.

His mind ran back over history and he pictured to himself the wars and plagues and pestilences and famines, the myriad scenes of battle and murder and

sudden death,of quiet lives of unknown peoples, of the loves and the hates of men and women dead a thousand or ten thousand years ago, upon all of whom these same stars had gazed with the same quiet calm, waiting unperturbed the working out of God's great Plan.

It seemed to him as the pictures of these things flashed through his mind, as though the world swung on its way through space leaving swirling behind it like a dense cloud of smoke visible to spiritual eyes, the prayers and tears of all humanity, the screams of the wounded and the dying upon all the battlefields since human history began, the appeals for mercy, the agony of despair, the strife of nations, the rise of races and their fall, the cry of the starving—all united in this dense black cloud which must roll upward to the very Throne of God. And through it all there sounded that same despairing appeal—Why!

And then he thought of his own little part in the mightly Drama, how he had been protected and shown a little of the great Plot, how a corner of the dark Curtain had been lifted for a moment so that he might catch a glimpse of that which lay beyond in order that he might know how to help.

How had he fulfilled his mission? What had he done? In his talk with the soldier who had asked such pointed questions at the "Y" hut, what had he accomplished? Nothing!

His conscience troubled him, yet, after all, what could he have done by argument? This question, as he began to feel, was one too great to be solved by any burst of enthusiasm, however ardent. It must be the quiet, steady work of time, unremitting, unrelenting, seeking every opportunity, undaunted by failure, and satisfied if, here and there, one person could be helped though ever so slightly. Then, perhaps, after the war he might return to Paris and meet again that wise man, Mr. Campion, the "Elder Brother," and learn how to fit himself for the great work.

And as his thought steadied itself into that firm resolve to "carry on," no matter how hopeless the task might seem, the calm of the great stars filled his heart and he turned away to seek his cabin and perhaps write a few more words in a letter to Louise which he intended to mail to her as soon as he got ashore.

As he carefully closed his cabin door before turning on the light which he as an officer was allowed and which was so thoroughly screened that no glimmer could possibly escape to be seen by lurking submarines, his mind was filled with the magic of the stars, of the sea, and keyed with the resolve to prove himself worthy, in time, of the confidence which had been placed in him; to show Mr. Campion, if he could ever find that gentleman again, that he was not an utterly unworthy pupil.

But he was not prepared for the shock which met him as he turned away from the door. Sitting quietly in the one chair which the cabin boasted, as though his presence were the most natural thing in the world, was the very man about whom Jimmie had just been thinking—Mr. Campion.

Jimmie started with surprise, gasped out, "Wh-wh-why!" and held out his hand to his unexpected visitor. Beyond that monosyllabic utterance he could not seem to think of another word to say for an instant, so completely was he taken aback. But Mr. Campion did not offer to shake hands, merely motioning Jimmie, with a smile, to sit on the edge of the berth.

"I am not here in my physical body, so I can't shake hands with you, but I am delighted that you are able to see so plainly. I have come to take you on a little excursion, if you are not afraid to venture, and as our time is short if you will lie down in the berth and fall asleep we will start on our travels."

Jimmie might have asked a few questions or have expressed some misgivings if Mr. Campion had not used that expression "If you are not afraid," but after that challenge he felt that it would not do for an officer in the American army to hold back. So he quietly turned off the light, disposed himself comfortably in the berth, and in what seemed to

him almost no time at all found himself standing on the floor, looking down upon his recumbent body, the whole cabin as plainly visible as though filled with daylight, and Mr. Campion, no longer avoiding physical contact, standing at his side with one hand on Jimmie's shoulder.

"This is your first conscious leaving of the body, and you must not fear that we shall not find the ship again or that anything will happen to her while you are away. Take my hand and trust me implicitly, and whatever you may see do not give way to fear. Come."

They soared away right through the fabric of the ship, hovering for a moment above her masts, looking down at her, for she was a beautiful sight as she plunged ahead through the smooth, rolling swell, plainly visible to their etheric vision.

Despite the assurances Mr. Campion had given him, Jimmie was afraid. There was his body, lying down below in its bunk, safe enough perhaps, but going one way while he was going another. The weather was calm but it was not weather which caused the ship to sail at her full speed without a light. Suppose a sub—he checked himself. Often had Jimmie gone over the top and never had he done so without fear, but no one who watched him would ever have known that Lieutenant Westman was afraid. Jimmie had the true courage to do his

duty whether or not he was afraid, to act just as though he did not know what fear was, and he had heard too many brave men admit constant fear to be ashamed of being afraid. But he would have been ashamed to *show* that he was afraid and never had he done so. He resolved that this experience should never drag from him any expression of the fear he really felt, so he turned away from the ship and looked his guide full in the face with a smile of readiness for anything that might come.

CHAPTER VII

Helping a Slain Soldier to Comfort His Mother

MR. Campion turned to him smiling:

"You have not forgotten the 'glide' I see, so we'll start on our trip."

They began at once to move with tremendous rapidity, Jimmie holding Mr. Campion's hand and noticing as they sped along that he seemed to see many more people traveling like themselves through the air than he had observed on his former visit to the Land of the Living Dead. They were moving in all directions, some quickly, some slowly, some merely drifting and apparently asleep. His own gait was so rapid that he merely made a mental note of the fact and hoped to ask Mr. Campion about it later.

In less time than it takes to tell about it they found themselves on the fighting line in France, and they stopped in front of a little dugout within which several men were talking. Jimmie recognized one as the tall soldier whom he had met in the "Y" hut. It developed from their talk that they expected to take part in a drive which they were sure would be

made within a day or two, and were discussing the conditions of the after-death state, if there were such a thing. But they were going about it in a most peculiar way— it seemed as though they were trying to hide under a camouflage of flippancy their genuine hunger for information.

One said:

"I don't believe death ends it all, but it don't seen to me like we've been given the right dope about it. I remember an old hymn I heard at a revival once. I forget just how it went, but it was something like this:

'One moment here my soul shall be,
The next, beyond the stars.'

That's sure going some, aint it?"

"St. Peter wouldn't have no chance to fire any questions at a guy going such a pace as that!"

"Also the guy would be goin' so fast he'd just naturally pass right through heaven an' out the other side before he could stop."

"He'd be out of luck, wouldn't he? But I don't believe the man who wrote that song knew anything about it. I don't believe people change like that when they die. Look at Slim Johnson. That guy is so slow he just naturally can't keep out of his own way an' do you think he'd change to a skyrocket like that if he was killed? No sir! He'd never show no speed like that. It'd take him a week to find it

out. I bet when a man's killed he just hangs round a spell an' then moseys along."

"Where to?"

"I dunno. Wherever he had any business, likely. Some might like to go to heaven an' play on a harp an' then some might not. For me, I never played on a harp an' I can't sing so I'd just like to sorter hang around an' see how things was goin'!"

"Maybe you couldn't. Supposin' you found you had an engagement some place an' a big fellow behind you with a pitchfork urgin' you to keep it?"

"Nothin' doin.' I don't believe in such things as that. I don't believe in any devil at all. I've heard some of these Englishmen tell of things they seen out at night when the war first started an' they were different from that."

The inquisitive soldier with whom Jimmie had talked broke in here:

"I believe a lieutenant I got talking to a few weeks ago had the right dope. He said we had lived before and we would live again and that we kept on being the same kind of men after we were killed as we were before. It seemed foolish to me then, but the more I think of it the more I believe he was right."

Here Mr. Campion drew Jimmie away.

"We have so little time," he said, "that we must make the most of it. You see that the seed you

planted and which you thought was wasted has really sprouted and has started the man to thinking. Later, if he should come in touch with the occult teaching, it will not be a novelty to him and he will be ready to consider it."

They had been moving rapidly while he spoke, and he had hardly finished before they stood in a room where an elderly couple, evidently man and wife, were sitting. The hour was past midnight, but for these two there was no sleep. An official envelope on the table would have told the story had it been needed, but it was not. The woman was crying audibly, the man silently, though the tears were rolling down his cheeks. Standing at one side was a soldier in a torn and muddy uniform, with a row of bullet holes across his chest where a machine gun had evidently done its work. He winced and cringed when the woman cried, stretched out his arms to her and called her "mother," but she did not hear.

Mr. Campion approached the soldier:

"Friend," he said, and Jimmie thought that never had he heard so kindly a voice.

The soldier turned to him.

"I can't make her hear. I can't make her hear. If she only knew that I am alive and not—not—suffering! She thinks I'm dead! but I'm not. I'm

just as much alive as I ever was, but I can't make her hear!"

"Friend!"

Again that gentle voice seemed to change the tense vibrations in the room—

"You are not dead, indeed, but you have laid aside your body of flesh and I can help you. Listen to me and do exactly as I say:

"Think of yourself in a clean, new uniform, without a wound and happy, and try to impress that thought upon your mother's mind."

Slowly, as Jimmie looked, the torn, dirty uniform, became clean and fresh, the bullet wounds disappeared, the man's face lost the lines of pain which had been seared upon it. He looked down at himself and gave a gasp of surprise.

"Now," said Mr. Campion, "always think of yourself as clean and fresh and happy and keep on saying to her 'I love you, I love you!' and after a while when she goes to sleep you will be able to talk to her for at that time she will leave her body for a while. Then try to make her realize that you are alive and well and that you love her. Love is the greatest force in all the world and in time you will soothe her pain; at night when she sleeps you can be with her and talk to her."

The soldier gave him a look only, but in that look were manifest a gratitude and respect which no

words could have expressed. He began to follow the directions.

Jimmie and Mr. Campion withdrew to a corner while the soldier, forcing a smile to his lips, kept repeating the formula, bending over the woman as she sat sobbing.

Gradually the sobs died away and a look of peace crept over her face. "Henry," she said to her husband, "it is all right with him, I feel it. He is alive and well."

Again Mr. Campion took Jimmie by the hand and they began to travel. This time it was back to the ship, and Jimmie soon found himself poised directly above the vessel on board of which in a little cabin his own body lay sleeping quietly.

The moon had gone down and to the physical eye the face of the ocean would have been dark, but those who travel in the Land of the Living Dead need no sun by day nor are they oppressed by darkness at night.

Natural laws run through all the cosmos which is but another way of saying that God rules everywhere. But the operation of certain natural laws differs in the different worlds, and those who find themselves suddenly projected into the higher realms of being are often apt to be much surprised at the things they see and hear.

Jimmie gazed at the beautiful sight which lay spread out below him where the great steamer was

plunging onwards through the gently rolling ocean, all around her the interminable stretch of waters, ever restless, which ran brimming from horizon to horizon with no human eye to watch the slow dignity of their great rollers as they heaved themselves like mighty giants over the beautiful, foamy lacework where the combers broke.

"Jimmie" said his companion as they hovered in the air, "some day perhaps I shall take you on a real journey through space and time, and I will show you old Atlantis and the things which happened there long before history had its beginning. We read tales of romance and of fiction, but I tell you that neither romance nor fiction ever could rival some of the wonderful things which happened in that strange old land which these very waves have traveled over. Now, let us go to your cabin."

They swept gently downward and entered the cabin where Jimmie stood looking down at his body which was quietly breathing in sleep.

"Queer thing, isn't it?"

"What? asked Mr, Campion.

"Why, its queer what makes it go! There it is, breathing just as regularly as clockwork, and here I am, outside of it and disconnected, as you might say, and yet it's working just as nicely as ever."

"The sight of it this way may help you to realize that the body is only a tool to be used by the 'you'

which is now standing before it. Later on you may grow to realize that the 'you' now standing here is only the tool of a still higher 'you.' "

"I wonder," said Jimmie musingly, "would I have known of it if the ship had been torpedoed and my body drowned while I was away from it?"

"You certainly would have known, had it happened, but it was because I knew that it would not happen that I came for you. Later I shall teach you to leave your body when you will."

"Didn't I leave my body tonight?"

"No. Not as I mean when I speak of leaving the body. Everyone leaves the body in sleep. You left yours after falling asleep and then I woke you, but you did not leave your body consciously. Had you done so you would have met the Dweller on the Threshhold."

"What is that?"

"The sum of your past lives. But there is something else I want to speak of now instead of the Dweller, and that is this: What did you notice particularly about the soldier who was trying to make his mother hear him?"

"Why,—er—I don't know. Let us see, he had been killed by a machine gun, was that it?"

"No. I mean what lesson could you draw from him? Every time you are taken out on a trip into the Land of the Living Dead it is not to gratify your

love for adventure but to teach you a lesson. Every time in the future when you are able to 'travel' alone you must be on the lookout for some lesson to learn. I showed you the inquisitive soldier for a purpose, and I took you to the other place also for a purpose.

"After this you will have to search out the lessons for yourself, for a great part of the good they do is brought about by the trouble which is taken and the thought and concentration spent in looking for them. But this time, to show you what I mean and to start you right, I will help you.

"You must learn to look for the big little things, not for the little big things. You took a wonderful journey such as kings might envy you, such as you used to read of in fairy stories or in the Arabian Nights, a most spectacular thing had there been any one to watch it, but that journey was of no importance compared with a number of little things which apparently you did not notice.

"The things which you must look for are those which emphasize great truths; things which are true for everybody, for all people. The journey was great, in its way, but it was great for you alone. If you went out into the world and spent your time telling people about that wonderful journey they would not believe you, but even should they believe you, what would you accomplish? From

the standpoint of the evolving spirit you would accomplish nothing.

"But take one of the little things which you noticed but which did not impress you for you were not on the watch for such things, the little fact that the soldier shrank when his mother cried—take that fact and ask yourself: Why? Why did he act as though some one had struck him with a whip? Was it not perfectly natural that she should cry? Had she laughed and smiled would he not have had a perfect right to have felt badly, to have felt as though she was glad to get rid of him? Well, the key lies in this: He knew, on account of being more sensitive to her thought than when he was in the physical body, that she had a subconscious fear that death is the end of all and that once dead he was lost to her forever. That was what caused him such pain. That was why he shrank and quivered so. He was alive and he knew he was alive. He was on another plane of being, true, but he was alive and not dead. Had he been able to tell her so, to show himself to her for just one moment as living, she would have lost the keeness of her grief, death would have been robbed of half its sting, no, more than half, nine tenths. There is your lesson, what do you learn from it?"

Jimmie hesitated, watching his body sleeping in the bunk. He was not just sure *what* the lesson

was. The Elder Brother did not give him long, however, for he began again.

"To find out what the lesson was is easy if you will go about it methodically. Take from the situation the permanent, universal truths. You have a son who has been killed, a mother who knows that he has been killed; you have the mother showing a perfectly natural grief; you have, (since you were able to see on both sides of the veil) the natural grief of the mother causing the son (unseen by her) the most acute sorrow. These things are universal as death is universal, for in the problem which we are considering, the manner of the son's death is of no moment. We have, then, the fact that deep and hopeless grief causes the dead to suffer. We have also the fact that lamentations for the dead cause them pain and take their attention away from the new conditions surrounding them, and hence hold them back in their evolution. Also, since the peculiar intensity of these lamentations is caused by the belief or fear of the living that death is the end of everything, you have an utterly needless suffering, arising from ignorance, which is harming both the dead and the living. Is the case growing more clear?"

"Yes, in a way. I can see where grief disturbs the dead and how the living suffer much more than

they need to suffer and all through ignorance. Is that the lesson?"

"Partly, but only partly. On the other side the suffering is much keener than on this side because it is not deadened by the flesh, so the dead man suffers far more than is necessary. Also the ones left behind suffer a great and needless amount of pain because they do not know that death is not the end. But there is a positive side. Not only do they suffer needlessly but they miss a great deal of joy which they might have, did they know the real facts of the matter. The mother who mourns her little child, could she see the child in the surpassing bliss of the heaven world, might still grieve, but her grief would be for herself, not for the child. Death is, in many cases, a promotion, not a loss; a benefit, a reward, a thing for which to be thankful. We need to get rid of that old idea which still clings so closely that death means permanent cessation of physical activity.

"But there is a further consideration. In the average death, not the result of sudden accident or of battle, the soul reviews the events of the past life, and it is this review which forms the real basis of our progress in evolution. I explained it to you before when I gave you that long talk in the Rue de l'Ex. You remember that the subconscious memory, which is a property of the vital body, is impressed

on the desire body at death while the soul is reviewing the past life. That impression forms the basis for the life in purgatory and also in heaven. When the attention of the passing soul is distracted as by the lamentations of those who are left behind, the record is not impressed on the desire body, hence the purgatory life and the heaven life both fail in their real purpose to a large extent, and just to that extent the past life of the man is wasted. You have seen how the dead are hurt by the grief of the living; not the calm sorrow of absence but the emotional outburst of despair. This is one lesson blocked out for you. In the future, wherever your life of service takes you, do all in your power to explain these facts to people so that in time this terrible injustice to the dead will cease. In just so far as you can do this, will you help evolution and bring nearer the great Day of Liberation."

"What was the other lesson of which you spoke?"

"I have shown you one; the other I think you would remember better if you find it out for yourself."

"But I don't understand how the subconscious memory is impressed. You say that it forms the basis for the life in purgatory, and that according to the keenness of the life in purgatory so is the completeness of our conquest over our sins?"

"That is it, exactly."

"And yet, in the deaths that I have watched from this side of the line there has been no review of the past life. Take Sergeant Strew, for instance. When he was killed he simply stepped out of his body and there he was. There was no lamentation, but he never stopped to think of his past life. Now why was that?"

"Because it was a departure from the normal way of dying. Nature intends to use a method consisting of death, then a review of past activities and mistakes and a purgatory and heaven life based on that review. That is the scheme of evolution, normally, but man with his divine prerogative of free will and choice often upsets Nature's plans, temporarily, of course. Normally man is not intended to die by violence or accident. Death on the battlefield or death in some accident which suddenly removes the Ego from a young and vigorous body is not the normal method planned for the race. It interferes with the review. Death by burning, such as sometimes happens to people in a house or a railroad wreck, may so terrify and excite the soul that for a long time after the actual severance of the silver cord and long after the review has become impossible, the soul is still frantically re-enacting the scene of its violent separation from the physical body.

"In the event of those who die from shell shock the review is usually impossible. In the case of Sergeant Strew, he was removed from his body instantly and was not aware of the fact, but even had he been aware of it, the violence of the vibrations at the time would have prevented his review even though no relatives interfered. But you will remember that he saw you at once and had hardly ceased greeting you when he was excited by the soldiers interfering with his body. However, even if you had not been there he would not have had any review on account of the suddenness of what was practically accidental death, also the very unfortunate vibrations which obtain generally all over the battle line, and several other contributory reasons which I won't go into now; but you see that death by accident or violence or battle is unfortunate, as it interferes with the normal process of Nature. Nature, however, is too powerful to be thwarted. Natural processes may be interfered with and thrown out of normal but they cannot be thwarted in the long run. Nature always employs the very abnormalities to further her ends, so that when an account is finally totaled, it may be seen that what at the time seemed to have been a wasted life was really not wasted at all, but that every part of it was used. So, in our Father's great universe we find the most

wonderful evidence of wisdom everywhere, wisdom without limit, wisdom whose heights we cannot scale and whose depths we cannot plumb."

Jimmie was looking at his friend while the latter was speaking and saw a sight new to him in his experiences in this wonderful country. He saw the soul body of a Master who was wrapped in adoration of the Divine Wisdom and in love for the Divine Creator.

Brilliant beyond description was this beautiful vision. The little cabin was aflame with the glory which filled it with coruscations of intense light in many shades from pure white to violet. In the center of this terrific radiance was the etheric body of the man, standing with bowed head as though in prayer.

Unprepared for such a vision, Jimmie staggered back against the wall, and it would have needed but little to have brought him to his knees had he not remembered the words spoken by the angel under somewhat similar circumstances, "See thou do it not." So he did not worship, but he stood in awe and wonder as the glory began to fade and his own friend, familiar once more, looked at him and with outstretched hand said:

"Forgive me, friend. For a moment I was thinking only of the Father and His Divine love, His

wonderful forbearance towards us, and the wisdom with which He makes even our weakness and our failures serve him.

"And now I shall leave you for the present. Keep up the exercises which I gave you. Seek out the other lesson, and as you tread the path may the Father's blessing rest upon you."

Slowly the cabin grew dim and dark, the movement of the vessel became noticeable; Jimmie felt the edges of the bunk and the softness of the blankets and with his outstretched hand touched the hardness of the wall. He was awake.

CHAPTER VIII

A Study of Auras

JIMMIE slept no more that night. He lay awake, pondering over the things which had happened, and gradually there came over him the conviction that the greatest lesson of all had not been told to him but had been left for him to find out for himself.

He began to reason the thing out. Why had he been selected and shown so many wonderful things? It was not to gratify his curiosity, that was certain. It was not that he might here and there pick out some one to whom he could bring a moderate degree of consolation for the loss of loved ones, although that was doubtless one of the minor purposes. What could it be, the great idea which lay behind?

It was not that he should heal the sick, although Mr. Campion had told him a great deal about the curing of physical illness by work upon the vital body. It was not that he should tell the story of his adventures in the Land of the Living Dead, for he had been especially warned that he must not do this since spiritual experiences will not stand re-

peating; and besides, he had been told that people would not believe him.

He remembered that the greatest Healer who had ever lived, had never, so far as he could recall, gone out of His way to heal. He had healed many, it is true, but only, as it were, as a side issue, only healing those who had obtruded themselves upon Him and whose demands had been more or less insistent. Then what was he to do? For what great purpose had he been instructed?

Healing was not the great reason, nor comforting the sorrowful. Training his own personality as an end in itself was out of the question—for that would have involved the element of selfishness. It must be something which he was to pass on to others—that much was clear, and he began to reason from analogy.

Suppose, he thought, he were a wealthy man, what could he do with his money in order to accomplish most? For one thing, he could give money to those in need. But, on the other hand, giving money to the needy is not always wise. It is apt to breed more troubles than it cures.

He could build factories and divide the profits with his employees. That would be better. That would be helping others to help themselves. When Christ was on earth He performed many miracles, and the Power which could multiply a few loaves

and fishes until they were enough to feed thousands could doubtless have turned stones into gold. Why then, did not Christ abolish poverty by giving gold to all the poor people whom He met?

The Christ, he reasoned, looked at the matter from the standpoint of the great Sun Spirit that He was. He knew these people to be evolving spirits whose progress from the pain and unhappiness of the lower stages of evolution to the great joy and happiness and splendor of the higher grades, was dependent solely upon spiritual advancement and not in any wise upon their accumulation of money or property. He knew that spiritual advancement is more often retarded by the possessions which, being close at hand and prominent, seem to their owner to be the most desirable things which life has to offer. Therefore He gave them those things which were the most valuable—help, encouragement, and teaching along the lines which, if followed, would bring the only real and permanent reward. In other words, Christ helped His followers to help themselves along the lines of spiritual achievement.

This life, Jimmie realized, taken as a whole from the first differentiation of the individual spirit within the great being of God before it starts on its long pilgrimage, until the final day of liberation when the aspirant can speak the glorious words, "It is finished," is like a school, and in it we learn

our lessons. The same law holds good as in our childhood school days, and that is that no one else can learn our lessons for us. A teacher can only help and encourage, lead and point out the way. The actual acquirement of learning must be through work done by ourselves.

True, the child at school can be forced by fear of punishment to study; questions and examinations can disclose fairly well the extent to which he has applied himself. But the punishment or the fear of it does not accomplish anything except to spur on a careless or lazy mentality. The learning acquired is the result of the child's own effort regardless of what may have been the incentive

So, carrying on the analogy, spiritual advancement for the majority of mankind, is the result of the spirit's own work, since they are entirely ignorant of the fact that they are in school, ignorant of the law of spiritual growth, hence devoid of incentive.

The education of a child who will study only under the threat of punishment is of very poor quality compared with that obtained by one who knows that it is receiving a training which will help it to get on in the world and who consequently tries to study and assist the teacher. But this education, although far surpassing the first, makes a poor showing compared with that obtained by the child who has a

real thirst for knowledge and who needs neither the lash of fear nor the spur of self-interest to urge it on.

So with spirtual growth. At first it is fostered by fear—fear of death, of eternity, and all the other fears which operate on mankind.

This stage of spiritual growth is excessively slow, life after life showing but little gain. When self-interest becomes the motive, progress is a little more rapid. It is, however, only when self is forgotten and the man works for love alone that progress is swift. Then he has reached the stage described in the parable of the Prodigal Son who, being yet a great way off, was seen by the Father who went to meet him.

Jimmie pondered these things carefully. The great purpose was not healing nor consolation. These were by-products, so to speak. The great purpose must be connected with helping people to help themselves. The key to the problem evidently lay hidden there.

Now, how was he to help others to help themselves? Spiritual advancement can come like education, only through the spirit's own efforts. But achievement, when made only under the spur of the law of compensation and when the result is not incorporated into the spirit until after death, is very slow.

The child at school, even if unwilling to learn, can see and understand the geography or the spelling book whose lists of names and words it is required to memorize. The spirit learning under the lash of the great Twin Laws does not understand but is learning blindly.

A knowledge of the laws of Rebirth and Consequence would be a great aid to many. It would show them what they were going and why they were doing it, and in a great number of cases it would accelerate spiritual progress wonderfully.

Jimmie felt that this was not the real answer to his problem, but he also felt that it was a start toward that answer, and he was sure that if he should do his best to spread the knowledge which he had gained—not the details of his adventures, but the great fact that a tremendous and wonderful spiritual life is going on around us all the time, and that at death we merely step out of our physical cocoon into a glorious freedom—if he should do his best to spread this knowledge and that of the great Twin Laws, he would later be given his real answer.

* * *

At the training camp to which he had been assigned Jimmie soon plunged into his work with earnestness. It was not hard work as yet, for his superiors had consideration for his physical condition, and made things as easy for him as they

could. In fact he had had one entire week after landing with nothing at all to do, and he spent that week getting acquainted with the city near which his camp was located. He had thought of visiting his home, but the leave given him was not quite long enough and he was unable to get it extended.

Walking around this unfamiliar city, he amused himself and practiced his newly budding powers by watching the auras of the people whom he met, not the people with whom he became acquainted, for Mr. Campion had been very particular to point out that it was forbidden to any occult student to investigate the auric colors of any person whom he might personally know. Such investigation must be concerned only with strangers and those with whom it was not at all likely that an acquaintance would ever be made.

It had not been long that he had been able to see the aura, and at first he had not realized what it was but supposed that he was affected in some way by shell shock. When first he had glimpsed the lightly changing colors which come and go around the head and shoulders, he had thought his eyes affected. Marjorie had told him of auras, and he had seen the color around the head of his nurse when first recovering consciousness, but somehow or other these impressions had been too vague. When he actually saw the real thing after the first glamour

of the life behind the veil had worn away, he did not recognize it.

He had first seen it in the trenches. A number of new men had been assigned to his company when returned to the front, and he had been watching one of these men, when a well aimed shell of small caliber had whizzed very close above the top of the parapet and near where this man was standing. The man did not move nor did he exclaim but stood as calmly as though he had been a veteran of twenty years of trench warfare. But to Jimmie, watching him, he appeared suddenly to be enveloped in a cloud of gray as in a fog. This was modified by considerable scarlet around the head, which showed that the man was afraid but that it was the fear of a brave man, for he was angry too, partly at himself. for being afraid. It showed, too, that while the man felt fear, yet he was in perfect control of himself and would not allow himself to show it; thus he proved himself, to Jimmie, to be one of the bravest of the brave.

This first glimpse which Jimmie had of the aura was not a very clear one. He had the impression that his eyes had suddenly clouded a little with moisture which, he thought, might explain the gray mist, but the appearance of scarlet had puzzled him. For several days he had no recurrence of the sight, but after that it had come more and more fre-

quently, especially after he had recognized it for what it was and had begun to practice the use of it. Later still he found that he could look at men and determine whether they were afraid or not, whether they were angry or not and to just what degree.

And still later he had begun to tell the difference between the aura and the vital body, which he had not been able to distinguish at first except that he knew the aura to be considerably outside the vital body in its extent.

During his voyage he had exercised his budding power on the members of the crew and those with whom he was sure he would not be thrown into companionship later. This had been unsatisfactory, however, for the members of the crew did not display much variation in their auric coloring, and the colors they did have were generally of a muddy and confused variety. Even when they had little bickerings among themselves, they never showed the pure scarlet but only a muddy, dirty red, considerably mixed with other colors.

Here in the city, however, it was different. There were plenty of people who showed only the undeveloped colors, it was true, but there were some whom he saw on the street whose auras were beautiful. He visited a church the first Sunday morning, thinking that there at least he would find the higher shades of the rarer colors, but was disappointed.

The most beautiful shade of blue he witnessed was that unconsciously owned by a little old lady who would, no doubt, have been very much surprised had some one told her that she was more spiritual than the minister himself.

Often on the street Jimmie would see a well dressed business man with a most kindly and benevolent expression yet with an aura which denoted greed, envy, lust, cruelty, and he would wonder what such a man would do in a world where such things were visible to all. If we can keep our self-respect here only by making others believe we are what we are not, although possibly trying to be the latter, then in a world where the character is an open book to all who care to read, what shall we do? Obviously it is "up to us" to lay the foundations of character of which we shall not be ashamed when it is visible to all.

Jimmie made a mental note that the driving home of this truth was one of those things which it was intended he should accomplish. Perhaps it was part of his answer.

CHAPTER IX

An Experience With Nature Spirits

IN a kind of waking dream passed the next few months of Jimmie's life, a life made very busy by the demands of his work and tinctured by a curious feeling that something was soon to happen, a feeling of uneasiness, of waiting, of suspense. He wrote to Louise regularly and received answers which were apparently satisfactory, to judge by the number of times that he read and re-read each letter. In his "sleep life," which was becoming more and more distinct and real, he was developing rapidly.

Every night he slipped the cable and soared out into the great world which lies unseen about us, and every time he did so he was more deeply impressed with the wondrous exaltation which the "astomphere" of that world produces.

Much of this, of course, it is impossible to describe for the reason that it is not to be communicated by language, much less by the printed word. I can think of only one way in which my meaning can be made clear to those who read this little story. Did you ever have a very vivid dream in which you went through some most delightful experience or adven-

ture? Can you not remember, in a faint and very imperfect way, the wonderful "atmosphere" of that fairy country which you dreamed you visited? Can you not recall how, when you tried to describe your dream, your words were so very cold and colorless? Can you not remember that the great thing which made you so enthusiastic about that dream was not so much the adventure itself as it was the strange, wonderful, tingling glamour of the thing? Glamour is not the right word but, as I said, there is no word in our language to hint at, far less to describe, the strange, exhilarated feeling which one has in that beautiful country. It is a feeling which must be experienced to be realized. It can never be portrayed to one who has never felt it. A man born blind can listen to your words of description of the beauty of color and the splendor of the sunset, but to him your words mean nothing. You speak of a "riot of color" when you have in mind some wonderful exhibition of atmospheric coloring in the western sky as the sun sinks to rest.

The blind man knows what a riot is and he has an academic idea of what color is, but of the combination, which is so clear in your mind, he has and can have no conception whatever.

So, to those of us who are not able to visit those glorious regions, the description of them seems cold. And, what is more unfortunate, the actions which

are based upon familiarity with those regions and their laws seem foolish.

It is but another verification of the Biblical statement that "the wisdom of God is foolishness to men." We are yet so steeped in selfishness, even those of us who most pride ourselves upon our unselfishness, that when we come face to face with real wisdom we are like the man in the parable, "speechless."

The morning and evening exercises Jimmie kept up faithfully, for he had now come to see the philosophy of them, and he felt ever more and more their tremendous effect. He had long ago quit smoking and meat eating. These departures of his were a never ending source of wonder to his comrades, who could not understand why any sane person should quit eating meat except, possibly, to cure rheumatism, while the giving up of tobacco could be accounted for by only one word, "fanaticism."

He liked to attend church, not only for the strong spiritual vibrations which were present in the church, but also to practice reading the colors in the various auras. The minister of the church to which he usually went thought that his sermons were the main attraction and took Jimmie's regular attendance as, in part, a compliment to himself. But Jimmie knew, as every occultist knows, that on Sunday the vibrations all over the land are different and vastly better than on week days. Jimmie had in

some of his excursions visited savage lands and had watched the various savage religious rites, and he was in a position to compare the vibration there to the vibrations which were prevalent over his own country on a Sunday. The tremendous contrast impressed upon him the fact that the western race is on the eve of something "different."

As the time passed on in work and drill, in various social activities, and in his more and more absorbinly interesting occult development, the terrible Russian debacle began to feature more and more in the news of the day and in the thoughts and words of men. Something of it Jimmie was able to watch at times when he made excursions during his sleeping hours. But he was hampered greatly by the fact that he had not as yet learned how to leave his body consciously, and so he was not in the full possession of choice as to where his wanderings would lead him. Generally, if he made up his mind strongly before he went to sleep, he could determine the locality of his visit, but to do this required interest in it and as on the occasions when he had visited the country of the former Czar he had not been able to understand a single thing which he had heard, this interest was more or less mild when compared with the intense longing to spend his time on the battle line with his old comrades, now and then helping one of them across to the other side of death.

The question which will occur to many at this time, a perfectly natural question, is this: Why did not Jimmie use his newly found power to visit Louise, since he was really in love with her and corresponded with her?

The reason was a two-fold one. In the first place, Jimmie came of gentle people, and his boyhood training had been such that it would have been impossible for him to have used any occult power to spy upon his sweetheart. The other reason, which would have operated had the first not been his guiding impulse, was the warning which Mr. Campion had strongly impressed upon him that the occult law will not permit the use of occult power for any motive of curiosity.

When any one is developing the ability to see on the other planes and to travel in "foreign countries," he must have practice, and to that end he is allowed to watch the auras and the play of auric colors about strangers; he is allowed to travel and examine distant lands and to watch people and their lives but only to do so for the purpose of study and practice. Abuse of spiritual power brings its own peculiar and terrible punshiment. But aside from any dread of punishment it would have been utterly foreign and abhorrent to Jimmie's nature to have attempted to spy upon his sweetheart. The idea never occurred to him, for he was, above and beyond all else, a gentleman.

The one remaining way of honorably communicating with her by means of sending out a call on the higher planes he had promised not to do, since she was busy all the time and her sleep was taken when she could get it instead of at regular intervals. Had he called her she would have come, but the call might have been sounded just at a time when her attention was needed for some critical operation—it might, possibly, have cost a life. So Jimmie had promised and being a gentleman, he loyally kept that promise. Therefore his only means of communication was by the same post upon which all the rest of American sweethearts had to depend.

But no such rule applied in the case of Marjorie. In that case he was at liberty to call when he got upon the other side, and in a very little while Marjorie would come dancing up, full of gayety and happiness, and the two would embark upon a long "glide," sometimes half around the world.

It was Marjorie who introduced him to the nature spirits with whom she was a prime favorite, and Jimmie made the acquaintance of the elves and the Brownies and even the fairies themselves. He learned that there are many more tribes of these strange creatures, some of whom avoid man as much as possible while some are actively hostile to him.

As a rule, those whom he met in his wanderings were gentle, timid folk, or gentle even if not timid.

He grew to be very fond of the Brownies in particular, whom he could always meet in out of the way forest countries. He loved to talk and play with them, and they grew to love him too, for they are of a rather affectionate nature but distrustful of men, since the vibrations of the average man are very coarse and unpleasant to a being of sensitive nature.

The fairies were harder to know, but with the help of Marjorie he made many friends among them, who used to visit him sometimes when he was out alone in the woods.

This phase of his extra-physical life was full of adventure and was like one long fairy story, but I am mentioning it now for a single purpose and that is to show what a tremendous dynamo of energy is the human will. . .

Jimmie had few holidays, but once in a while he was able to get away from the camp and plunge into the woods, which he could reach after a very short railway journey. He liked to go out into the forest for the reason that is was here the little people were to be found, and after they discovered the fact that he was harmless to them they used to flock around him whenever they caught him wandering alone, and together they had a merry time.

It was on one of these trips that he had not gone far into the woods when he was aware of something wrong with the vibrations in the ether. He heard no one calling, but somehow he knew that there was

trouble at hand, and he set about to find it. It was only a few minutes after first sensing the etheric disturbance that he saw in a little glade one of his Brownie friends trying to defend himself against the attacks of five most loathsome beings. I shall not attempt to describe them beyond saying that they were apparently semi-human, semi- animal. Evidently they were not of the harmless type of nature spirits, for the little Brownie was having a hard time of it. He was not fighting with any weapon but would make motions at the creatures, and as he did so they would shrink back, much as though he had struck them. At once, however, they would recover and press in on him again, and Jimmie knew, though this was his first experience of the sort, that he was witnessing a combat on the etheric plane.

As he came up the Brownie tried to break through the circle, but he was evidently weakened in some way, and three of the creatures blocked him and drove him back.

They did not touch the Brownie nor did the Brownie touch them, yet in some way or other the contact was a most practical one since Jimmie could tell by his little friend's movements that he was much distressed and that the odds were too great against him.

There was not the slightest hesitation in Jimmie's action. Never before had he seen such a thing as a

fight upon this plane of being, but he did know that there was such a thing as a contest between different sets of forces. Evidently it was some such thing which he was witnessing now and he knew why the little Brownie was getting the worst of it.

On the other plane a contest is a contest, not of blows or of what would correspond to physical force, but of the will. It is not entirely of the will either. For instance, a number of evilly inclined spirits may be tormenting another, yet when one of the "Masters" happens by and puts a stop to the affair, he does not do so by physical force nor yet by a supreme exercise of a stronger will, though of course he has stronger will. His power to stop the cruelty is the result of a stronger will combined with the fact that his higher position in the scale of being has given him an aura whose vibrations are so strong that a being whose vibrations are less good or positively evil, simply cannot endure the higher vibratory rate of the Master's presence. This is an extreme instance, of course, but it holds good on all planes of nature where the higher vibrations can be felt, and it would act with full power on the physical plane except the the fact that the higher vibrations here are so dulled by the flesh that they lose their force and can only act slowly. It reminds one strongly of a line in a hymn which says, "Where Thou art present, evil cannot be," and the statement holds true in all cases

where good is brought into contact with evil, the effect varying with the degree of difference between the intensity of the good and the intensity of the evil.

Now the Brownies are a gentle, likable, little race, but they are nature spirits, and while innocent and sensitive to a great degree, their innocence is not the result of a positive and long drawn out fight against temptation, but is more like the innocence of childhood, and therefore is not a source of power. They are remarkably like little children in many ways, with a child's affection and a child's intuitive likes and dislikes but with a good deal of a child's helplessness against aggression.

So this little Brownie, who was so bravely fighting against terrible odds, did not have the strength which would have been his had he been the product of a long evolution of physical plane suffering and training. He was like a little, helpless child, striking bravely but futilely against a pack of wolves who are restrained only because they think him to be stronger than he is.

Such was the state of affairs when Jimmie came upon the scene. A sharp exclamation burst from him and in a few strides he stood by the Brownie and faced the loathsome elementals who were attacking him. Jimmie merely looked at them, pointed, said "Go", and used his imagination and will to

sweep them together and disintegrate them. They leered horribly at him and mouthed and gibbered, but the human will, the result of long evolution, was too strong for them and they simply faded from sight like a vanishing picture on the screen.

The Brownie had fallen in a heap when Jimmie took the fight off his hands, but recuperative power on the etheric plane is rapid, and the elementals had hardly disappeared when he sprang up and with one bound threw himself into Jimmie's arms and clung to him, sobbing incoherently for all the world like a child; and since his height was only about eighteen inches, it is not to be wondered at that Jimmie had the same feeling which one would have after rescuing a child from a vicious dog.

This was the first time that a Brownie had ever touched him, for they are a shy little people. But now that his friendship was proved, this one Brownie, at any rate, clung to him and caressed his cheek and stroked his hair and kept repeating:

"Jimmie, my friend; Jimmie, my friend."

They walked on for a few minutes, and since the Brownie weighed nothing, being an etheric entity, Jimmie simply held him as he would have held a child and tried to soothe him gently and help him recover from his fright. Thus they were situated when a whole troop of the little people came dancing out of the denser forest and spied them.

CHAPTER X

A Crisis in Love

WHEN the band of Brownies spied the most unheard of sight which greeted them as they swept out of the cover of the woods and came face to face with Jimmie holding his little Brownie friend in his arms, they showed signs of greatest excitement.

Very naturally and just as human beings might do, they jumped to the conclusion that at least one Brownie had turned traitor to his race and kindred. They surrounded Jimmie at a respectful distance and began to shout to his little companion in their own language, which Jimmie recognized since it was a sort of universal language, but still he could not tell what they were saying.

His little friend understood, however, and showed the most unmistakable tokens of distress. Finally, the accusations becoming too harsh for his endurance, he leaped out of Jimmie's arms and ran straight for the Brownie who seemed to be the leader of the band. He then began an explanation of the occurrence. Jimmie could follow him quite well al-

though he talked faster than any Frenchman he had ever heard. The little fellow's powers of gesticulation were wonderful.

Acted out before him and accompanied by the most rapid verbal performance to which he had ever listened, Jimmie saw the whole adventure. The little Brownie would have made an incomparable actor could he have been enticed upon a stage and given a more material body. The surprise by the horrible elementals; the desperate seeking for some way to escape; the tremendous fight, and the awful weariness which was fast giving way to the certainty of death; the mouthings and grimaces of the hostile circle around him, and the despair which overcame him when each attempt at escape was blocked; then the tremendous relief when suddenly this great giant of a human being with that terrible human will power stood at his side and took his part in the unequal struggle.

"You see," the Brownie shrieked at last, "It is all right. He is my friend. You see!"

Here his enthusiasm overcame him, and with one tremendous leap he landed squarely on Jimmie's shoulder and began to jump from one shoulder to the other, every now and then giving Jimmie's head a friendly kick as he passed over it. This, since he was an etheric entity, did not give Jimmie any inconvenience and seemed to amuse the crowd of Brownies immensely.

They crowded in a little closer, and Jimmie was aware of the change in their attitude by the friendliness of their glances, the frequent smiles with which they greeted him, and the bantering manner in which they spoke to his active little friend.

As a general thing the vibrations of the human race are offensive to the little people for the reason that most human beings, on account of their habitual line of thinking and acting, have built into their etheric bodies most undesirable etheric matter.

To a great extent this also holds true of their desire bodies, and as the Brownies are on the borderland between the two kingdoms, they are affected very adversely thereby.

Jimmie did not know exactly what to do so he did the most natural thing possible, he sat down on a log and stretched his feet out in front of him. One of the bolder of the Brownies after several feints took a running start and jumped over his feet, giving one of them a little touch with his foot as he passed over. Finding that he was still unhurt he jumped again, this time landing on Jimmie's foot and immediately jumping away again.

Meantime a number of them had come up beyond reach of his arms and were discussing him in their queer little high-pitched voices, while he felt many touches on his back and little tweaks at his belt and blouse. This was entirely possible even though the little folk were not on the physical plane. The seem-

ing incongruity did not occur to Jimmie until some time afterward, for when we see that a thing is really true we are very prone to accept the fact without question, never stopping to consider that according to all theory and reason the fact ought to be a fancy only.

"Say, Buster," Jimmie spoke to the little Brownie whom he had saved from the elementals, "What's the matter with your friends? They seem to be afraid of me. Tell them I won't hurt them."

"Oh, they're foolish! They're afraid. You won't hurt. You're a friend."

He began an impassioned harangue in his own language with the result that three Brownies came and sat on Jimmie's leather leggings, while some others came within reach of his arm but stood as though ready to jump at a moment's notice.

Jimmie sat perfectly still, not moving a muscle except that he kept talking to "Buster", whose name he asked in vain as the little fellow seemed to be proud of the name Jimmie himself had carelessly bestowed, and to every inquiry returned the statement that "Buster" was his name and he knew no other.

Gradually the talk and Buster's assurances had their effect, and the rest of the Brownies began to lose their fear of the big human being who had saved their comrade from so awful a fate. They drew

nearer and showed more interest in the conversation, and Jimmie took advantage of the fact to ask Buster what would have happened to him had the elementals won the fight. He was uncertain whether death was a possibility to any being who had no physical body, but the great relief and gratitude which Buster had evinced made it clear that an adverse outcome of the combat would at least have been highly disagreeable to the Brownie.

But Buster hated to think of what would have happened. He did not, apparently, like to use his imagination. Like a child intent on play he was impatient of any attempt to make him think seriously, and only cared for his play and the particular sport upon which he happened to be engaged. Irresponsibility seemed to be the keynote of his make-up, and concentration upon any particular thing, unless he happened to be interested in it, was irksome to him. Jimmie finally gave up the attempt and turned his attention to making friends with the rest of the band.

In this he was successful for the Brownies soon lost all their fear of him and came within reach of his arms without watching him to forestall any possible hostile movement.

"Buster," said Jimmie at length, "tell me why your people were afraid of me. What harm can I do them?"

"You see," squeaked Buster, "your will power. It is so strong. That is why. They did not know as I know."

It took a great many questions to elicit the reason for the Brownies' shyness, but Buster, with the help of others who took a hand in the conversation, finally enlightened Jimmie as to the cause of the disinclination which his people have towards association with mortals.

It seems that not only are the human vibrations usually very disagreeable to the Brownies, but the human will power is so strong that when it is intelligently directed, they are often unable to resist it. This makes them afraid of the neighborhood of men, for some human beings are gifted with a slight clairvoyance and it frequently happens that the clairvoyant ones are not the most advanced members of the race. Thus a low grade mortal with a little clairvoyant power can make himself very disagreeable to the Brownies.

Also it developed that to touch a human being gives that being in some mysterious way an added power of being disagreeable, should he so choose. From this Jimmie could see why the Brownies were so horrified when they first saw Buster riding in his arms and on such friendly terms with him.

By this time all reserve was thrown to the winds and the whole Brownie band were reveling in their

acquaintance with a man. They climbed all over him, they stood on his head and jumped over his feet, and it was with considerable difficulty that Jimmie could get one to stop in his play and answer any questions. It was as though their intelligence made them somewhat like a very young child—able to talk and to understand simple language but wholly incapable of any mental effort beyond that of a six or seven year old. But, like children, their love and trust, once given, were without reserve.

So Jimmie spent a pleasant afternoon with his little friends until a near approach of some berry pickers alarmed them, and they scampered off into the forest after making him promise another visit. He had come to the conclusion that any real information to be obtained about them must be derived from some other source than themselves. It was the first time that he had been brought into contact with nature spirits or elementals, and he resolved to find out more about them since it was evident that in meeting them he had glanced into another one of the mansions of our Father's House, which is so full of wonders.

The Brownies having gone, he started for home, walking slowly and reviewing in his mind the things he would put in his next letter to Louise and thinking a little, too, of how happy he would be when she should come home again and when the war should

be over and peace declared. He would have to work hard to make up for lost time and earn the money for the little home which he wanted so much. And the great work must not be forgotten either, for he would have to plan some way to reach the great mass of people who are so hungry for every little crumb of spiritual knowledge, and who are often fed with pebbles instead of crumbs. After all, the world was a fine place to live in for one who was willing to work, and he began to feel the thrill of joy which is the reward of every earnest worker, and from which one may imagine the bliss which is the part of the great Brothers of the Light, who spend their energy to serve mankind and who renounce the rest and peace of heaven itself in order to serve.

He walked back to the train in a sort of dream, so fascinated was he in the hopes and plans which he had made and the castles in the air which he had built. And through it all there ran that dangerous thread of vanity, which so often insinuates itself in the place of other and grosser forms of evil which we may have managed to throw out. He was not conscious that it was vanity, but had he stopped to analyze, he would have known that his dreams were all based on what *he* would do and on the service which *he* would perform, and there was lacking that one great mark of the devoted worker, namely, a

thankfulness to the Master for giving him *opportunity to serve.*

It is the subtle difference between the laudable joy of service and the unjustifiable pride of service which often makes our deposits in the heavenly treasure house of humble silver instead of kingly gold.

But Jimmie was unconscious of this sinister thread which ran through the warp and woof of his dreams. He dwelt on the happiness which he hoped would be his and, too, on the possibility that he might be able to get back to France before the "show" was over, for he coveted one of the valor medals and meant to get one if he had to capture a whole German army single-handed. Here he could not help smiling at himself for his imagination was presenting him with pictures of himself driving ahead of him a whole company of "Fritzies," and with the smile he came back to earth again.

It was a happy and enthusiastic Jimmie who entered his quarters that evening, singing a song which had been one of the trench favorites and literally bubbling over with hope and irresponsibility. And there upon his table lay a letter from France, from Louise.

He snatched it quickly and felt a slight wonder that is was so thin, but the wonder was only a semi-

conscious one as he tore the envelope open in his eagerness to know what she had to say.

His face changed as he read the first few lines, and the letter fluttered from his hand. He said nothing but presently went and leaned his head against the wall. In a little while he came back and picked up the letter from the floor and read it again. It was cruelly short.

"Dear Mr. Westman," it ran, "I am about to sail for home on the next convenient steamer and write to tell you not to send any more letters to France for me. On thinking it over I am convinced that our engagement was not the result of a sufficiently long acquaintance, so I release you and think that it would be better to let the matter end there. I shall not expect any more letters from you, and I trust that you will regard my wishes in the matter and forget that I ever entered your life. With best wishes for your future happiness, etc."

Jimmie felt stunned. The other letters he had had from Louise were generally short, for she was worked almost to death and he knew it and made allowance for it, but in those short letters, almost notes, she had never before given expression to a word of regret for the engagement into which they had entered. All sorts of reasons flashed through his mind only to be rejected as unworthy of himself or Louise. ?

Perhaps she had met some one whom she loved better. That was a possibility, he admitted to himself, but would not explain the curtness and abruptness of the letter. Perhaps she had—Oh! He could not believe that she really wrote what was in her mind. Yet, if she did not write what was in her mind, why should she write at all? She was not compelled to write. There was no law which forced her to write. She surely could not be angry for she knew very well that he had been compelled to obey his orders and that he had not left France willingly. This was war time, orders were orders, and Louise knew that as well as he, for she had been up near the front where men were dying every day on account of these same "orders."

The more he thought the matter over the more he found that his love for Louise was a very deep and strong feeling. Well could he remember the kindly, gentle nursing, the little things she had done for him when he was helpless, how she had gone without some of the sleep she needed so badly in order to read to him when the shellshock nervousness came over him. Once when he had lain there, in no great pain it is true, yet almost screaming from the horror of those jagged nerves, she had sat by him with her hand on his forehead, soothing him with little verses of poetry, snatches of hymns, anything that she could remember, to steady his mind and take his thoughts away from that strange, pe-

culiar condition which is the result of shell shock and which is always different.

And then, after he was well—oh shucks! letter or no letter, he would not believe what she had written until she had confirmed it with her own spoken words. He would find her and learn from her own lips.

It was characteristic of Jimmie that in all the excuses and reasons and explanations which he had threshed over in his mind, never once had he thought of Louise discarding him for any financial reasons. It was as fine and noble a tribute as he could have laid at the feet of this golden girl of his, that all the reasons which he could imagine for her action took the form of a fear that in some way he had not measured up to the high standard which she had set for him, or that he had unwittingly offended her in some way, but never once did he dream of a low or base, mercenary motive on her part. Could she have known this, it would surely have melted her heart towards him, but Jimmie himself, was as unconscious of the matter as she was; to ascribe an unworthy motive to her letter simply had never occured to him.

He knew the little town where her home was. He figured that on account of the slowness of the postal service from France, she had probably reached this country some time ahead of her letter, and the chances were that she was even now at home. The

thought set him tingling, and he made up his mind that he simply must get a week's furlough and follow the matter to the end.

But furloughs are not easy to get in time of war. He knew it would take at least a day to reach her home and a day to get back, and he wanted a day there. If connections were bad, it might well take longer, so he decided to ask for a week.

That night as he fell asleep he determined to sound a call for Marjorie, and sure enough, when he awoke in the now familiar conditions of the Desire World, he became conscious that Marjorie was coming. So he was not surprised at all when the young lady herself, laughing and evidently in the best of spirits, stood before him.

Jimmie at once began to tell the story of his woes in the hope that Marjorie would sympathize with him and offer to help him, but he had reckoned without his hostess for all she did was to laugh at him. If those of us who regard the other world as a place of funereal gloom and despair and hopelessness could have looked on at that little scene, how much of the dread of death would we have lost.

Marjorie was dead. This girl had been torn from her family by that ruthless King of Terrors, and according to all the generally accepted beliefs she should have been anything but what she really was —happy, joyous with the pure joy of living— happy conditions in which she lived, freed from all

the cramping necessities of physical life, pain, weariness, the ten thousand little things which never rise above the threshold of consciousness but which in their aggregate amount to a continuous discomfort; and above all, happy because not separated from her family, although they were separated from her.

This apparently anomalous condition arose from the fact that every night she could meet them on the desire plane, talk to them, and "visit" with them; although they were unable to carry back the memory of these meetings, she was under no such limitation. So it was really true that all the separation was on their side, not on hers. Hence there is nothing to be wondered at in her happiness, for why should she not be happy?

But Jimmie thought she was entirely too happy. He, himself, was miserable or thought he was, and he needed sympathy. Also, though he had not admitted it to himself, he hoped that Marjorie would tell him something about Louise and why she had acted so. He felt that Marjorie must know. It would not be right to ask, but perhaps she would volunteer a few words of comfort. This thought of Jimmie's did not escape Marjorie for a moment, and it was what she was laughing at. Jimmie had come to have an idea that he was of considerable importance, and there was a lesson on the subject due him.

CHAPTER XI

Light Again

JIMMIE was looking for sympathy. He was really feeling that he had been rather badly used, and he had sounded a call for Marjorie with a hazy idea that perhaps she could tell him why Louise had acted in such an extraordinary manner. In the finer realms, knowledge does not always have to be acquired in the same way that we obtain it in the physical world, but the advanced soul can very often know things by merely turning his attention to them.

Jimmie was well aware of this fact but was doubly barred from making use of it, for in the first place he was not far enough advanced to gain much information in this way, and also in this particular instance it would have been unfair to attempt to learn why Louise had done as she had except by the method of calling on her in person.

But there remained a slight possibility that Marjorie knew something about the matter and might be willing to give him a few hints, and also he thought that she would sympathize with him and

thus encourage him even if she did not give him any real information.

But Marjorie, though she had come at his call for help, had not come in the way he had expected. He knew that Marjorie could sense from the vibrations that surrounded him that he was in deep trouble, and he had expected that she would come up all sympathy and interest and ready to proffer her help, so it was no wonder that he should have been somewhat shocked to find her so full of life and happiness and the sheer, pure joy of living. Sympathy was apparently far from her mind just at the time.

"Oh, Jimmie, I'm so glad you called me. I was wonderng whether you would come over soon. I have so much to tell you; just the most 'be-you-tiful' things that you ever dreamed of!"

Jimmie looked at her, contemplatively, but was silent.

"They've given me a promotion, Jimmie, isn't that fine? Now I can do more work and be of some real use. They've given me a little class to teach, some of the little children who have just passed over, and they're such dear little things! They were so frightened and bewildered, but I've been showing them that there's nothing to fear and nothing around them but love, and it's so beautiful to see them come out of their shells of terror and just blossom out as

the little flowers do when the sun shines on them. I'm so happy I can't stay still."

What an object lesson it would have been to some of the sorrowing of earth life could they have seen that radiant girl with the love and happiness of that plane on which she was living, and transfigured with the joy of the realm into which she was leading those poor little mites who had been driven out of their bodies by the harshness of conditions on the physical plane. Could the relatives of those children have seen her, they would have given their sorrow and sympathy, not to the ones who had "died," but to those who had been left to face the long struggle and hard experiences of earth.

Jimmie tried to meet her mood and succeeded in congratulating her on the congenial work which had been assigned to her, but the dominant thought in his mind would not be banished so easily and he blurted out:

"I'm in trouble, Marjorie."

Instantly Marjorie's face grew grave and Jimmie continued:

"Have you seen Louise lately?"

"No, Jimmie, I have not. I've been so very busy, and then you know I don't go down to the earth

plane. The only time I see any of my earth friends is when they come over here in sleep, and they often fail to come. I'm sure there's nothing serious troubling you. You know that you and Louise are both on the earth plane, and you can go and see her if you want to. It's fortunate you asked me the question because I will just forget it; but suppose you had asked the Elder Brother a question of mere curiosity, what would he have thought!"

Her face had cleared and she was now laughing at him again, but she had given him quite a shock.

"Marjorie, I envy those little children. Sometime I want to come over and see your little class if I may. Now I am going back and I will take your advice, for you have helped me more than you know, perhaps, and more than I expected. You are a dear, true friend, Marjorie."

Back in his physical body Jimmie thought over her words and realized more and more how he had let his selfishness mislead him. "Curiosity!" A "question of mere curiosity," it certainly was. The very thing he had known well he must not do, he had done. And she had not rebuked him nor found fault with him, but had just led him so gently and so kindly to see his error. He made up his mind that never again would he make such a mistake and

never again would he forget the great watchword of "Service."

* * * * * *

"Mother! I can see it! O Mother, Mother! I can see it!"

"Can you! Oh, darling, are you sure? Don't strain your eyes. Remember what the doctor said. Better let me put the bandage back."

"No, no. I can't bear that awful bandage any more. I can see, I tell you. I saw that lone pine over on the ridge almost as well as I ever saw it. Don't put the bandage back. I'll keep my eyes shut and that will do as well. I promise I will. Really and truly I will. And I'm going out for a little walk all by myself. I promise you I won't look much and I'll keep my eyes almost closed."

"You willful girl! Don't go and spoil everything now. Better let me put the bandage back and lie down for a while."

"Remember I'm a nurse, Mother, and I know a lot. I won't strain my eyes even the least little bit, but I must get out for a little walk or I think I'll die. Please, Mother! I know the way blindfolded even, so I won't need to look but just a little."

"Where do you want to go?"

"Just over to the old pine on the ridge and then I'll come right back. I know the way in the dark, and I think if I just walk over there all by myself

and touch the old tree, it will almost make me well again."

"Well, all right, but don't be gone long or I'll come after you, and don't try to open your eyes. They're too weak yet."

The sun was shining almost directly down upon a little cotttage where this conversation took place, filling the gently rolling country side with its summer glory, flecking the ground between the trees with quivering splotches of gold, and bringing into sharp relief the houses of the village beyond and the ridges of the woods nearby, and showing in its lonely grandeur the great tree which reared its head far above its fellows on a low elevation some few hundred yards behind the house.

It was towards this tree that a girl soon took her way, emerging from the back door of the house, and wearing on her head an old-fashioned sun bonnet which effectually shaded her face from the brilliant light around her. She walked slowly as though a little uncertain of the path and with one hand partly outstretched in the manner of one who walks by night.

There was a distinct path towards the big tree, for it was the short cut to the village and always used by those who preferred to walk through the cool of the woods instead of by the slightly longer wagon road.

The girl walked along it as though it were familiar to her, as indeed it should be, for she had been born and brought up in that little cottage where her mother had just gone back to the homely task of washing dishes after sundry long and anxious looks at the retreating figure.

There was no danger to the venturesome traveler, she knew, for there in the great State of New York there were no invading armies and no murderous artillery or bombs. No danger threatened that slender figure on the path, either from man or beast, and yet the mother sought the doorway every now and then to cast another loving look at the sunbonnet bobbing its leisurely way towards the goal of the great tree on the ridge. No, there was no danger, for war was far from this peaceful land.

Now the sunbonnet was near the tree and soon it would be starting on its return journey. But stop! The mother took off her glasses and polished them on her apron. Some one else was on the path. Some one else wearing a uniform and looking like a soldier. Surely it could not be. Soldiers sometimes passed through the village but not often, and the village boys who could go had all gone to the war. Strangers never came along this path. Well! The soldier man had stopped the sunbonnet and was talking to it, asking the way, doubtless. How long it took to ask the way! Sunbonnet, Sunbonnet! what

is the matter? Don't you know better than to stop and talk to strange soldier men? The soldier man has caught Sunbonnet in his arms and is embracing her! Oh, this is awful! The mother hastened out of the back door and along the path. Her suspense did not last long for she soon met Sunbonnet walking back, and with her, his arm about her, walked a tall officer who was calling her "Louise" and other things, just as though Sunbonnet had known him well.

That afternoon as they all sat on the porch, everything was made clear. Jimmie had started to ride to the house after being directed as to the way, but something had changed his mind and he had walked.

"And do you know, I was about to take the long way by the road when a little friend of mine whom I know as "Buster" called to me from the woods and showed me the path."

"Buster, Buster," said Louise thoughtfully, "I don't remember any boy around here who is called that."

"No. That's another story which I'll tell you some day, but Buster thought he owed me a good turn and right well he paid his debt."

Louise too had her story to tell. There had been a great need, and she had been sent to a station up near the front where a temporary hospital was locat-

ed and where the nurses and surgeons were working to the limit of endurance. One night an airman of the great nation whose high degree of culture impels it to bomb hospitals and other defenseless places, had dropped a number of bombs on the spot, and one of them had fallen near Louise as she was trying to help her wounded charge away from the sign of the Red Cross which ought to have been their best protection. A great flash and roar, a violent blow on the head, and she had known nothing more until she awakened in a hospital in Paris to find her eyes tightly bandaged and their sight very nearly gone.

Her first thought was for Jimmie, and she determined that never would she burden him with a sightless and disfigured wife—hence the letter which in the despair of her heart she had had written in defiance of the rules, and which another nurse had posted for her.

The disfigurement had yielded to skillful treatment, but the eyesight grew worse, and she was sent home, a woebegone little piece of flotsam cast by the great storm of war upon a peaceful shore.

But in the last day or two she had been able to discern a little light, and that morning, having quietly removed the bandage, she had found that, though blurred and distorted, her sight was coming back.

"And Oh! God is good to me, Jimmie. He has given me back my sight, and He has given me something worth so much more even than that."

"What?"

"How much would you like to know?"

* * * * *

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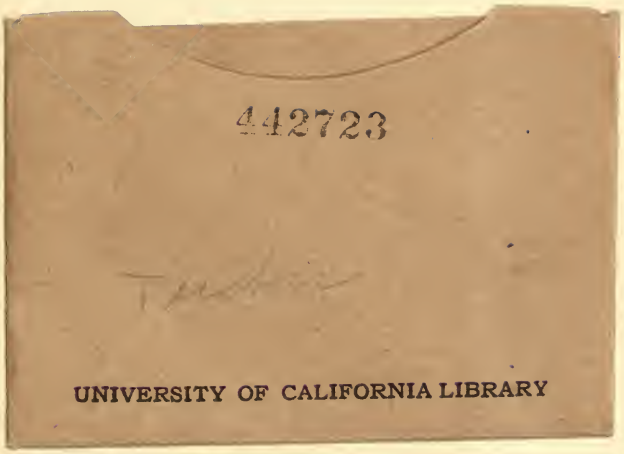
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